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GENERAL SULLIVAN

NOT A

PENSIONER OF LUZERNE

(MINISTER OF FRANCE AT PHILADELPHIA, 1778-1783).

WITH THE REPORT OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, VINDICATING HIM FROM THE CHARGE
MADE BY GEORGE BANCROFT.

by
T. C. Amory

SECOND EDITION.

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General Sullivan not a pensioner of Luze

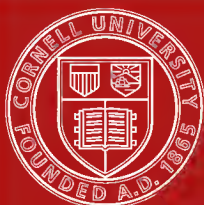


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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

IN presenting to the public another edition of the vindication of General Sullivan from the charge that he was a pensioner of Luzerne while delegate in 1780 and 1781 to the Continental Congress from New Hampshire, we are glad to present the report of the Historical Society of that State sustaining the position taken by his descendants and kinsmen that the charge was not only not proved, but was alike inconsistent with his whole career, public and private, with what was known of his situation and conduct at the time, and with the evidence offered by his maligner. The committee appointed by the society in June to inquire into the justice of the charge submitted their report, understood to have been drawn up by their chairman, also president of the society. It was subscribed by the other members of the committee, and, duly accepted by their associates, has recently been printed in their publications.

The committee consisted of members peculiarly competent to weigh the evidence and come to a just conclusion, from their familiarity with the history of the revolutionary epoch, and especially with what concerned the part taken by their own State and its representatives in affairs within and without its limits. The high estimate placed upon their character and qualifications for the duty imposed cannot be gainsaid, and the conclusions they have reached, after thorough investigation, are entitled to confidence. The evidence pretended for the charge being in a

foreign language, and the facts and circumstances to be considered of a nature which demanded fuller information than even those generally familiar with American history possess, only a tribunal so constituted was competent to come to a decision which precluded the possibility of misapprehension.

The descendants of General Sullivan, however justly aggrieved at this outrage upon the memory of an ancestor, from the share he took as a leader in the civil and military incidents of the Revolution, their most precious heirloom, have refrained from any act or expression of resentment, in the hope that, when all was stated and substantiated proving the injustice of the charge, it would be as publicly withdrawn as it was publicly made. Our law, unlike that of some other countries, provides no reparation for wrongs of this nature; but this omission does not lessen their claim to the amends which every man of honor or any pretension to the respect of his fellow-men is under obligation to make. If by an inference, shown to be wholly without foundation, he has been misled into wounding the just and reasonable susceptibility of the family and kinsfolk of one he has misrepresented, the part of honor is to retract: to persist is to cover himself with infamy.

They may trust to the candor and justice of their fellow-countrymen for retribution of so great a wrong if suffered to go unredressed, but they certainly ought not to neglect any measures which will prevent such an imputation attaching to his memory. The statement heretofore published is again presented, and to it is now appended the report alluded to, of the Historical Society of New Hampshire. Making every effort to give it the widest circulation in their power at home and abroad, they hope, if it does not induce the historian to retract his charge, it will prevent historical students of the present and all future generations from believing it.

GENERAL SULLIVAN NOT A PENSIONER OF LUZERNE.

FOR historical students, familiar with the events of our war of independence and the character of its leaders, reference to the early life or subsequent career of General Sullivan may not be requisite for our present purpose. To the public generally such information in regard to both is indispensable, for any thorough understanding of the questions which it is proposed to consider. It is certainly with no wish to parade his claim to grateful acknowledgment from his country, that this brief review of the part which he took in the struggle for national existence, is presented. With his countrymen generally, he did his best to make that struggle a success, according to his abilities and opportunities. But, when unjustly assailed, whoever is interested in his memory is not only entitled, but under solemn obligation, to vindicate it from undeserved reproach.

His father came to this country, in early manhood, to seek an asylum from arbitrary rule at home. Having enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, he long devoted himself at Somersworth in New Hampshire, and at Berwick in Maine, to the instruction of youth. His life was prolonged to the great age of one hundred and five, his death occurring in 1795. Of his six children, four took an active part in the revolutionary contest. The eldest, an officer in the English navy, died before the war broke out. Daniel resided at Sullivan in Maine, on Frenchman's Bay near Mount Desert. James early acquired

reputation at the bar, and, at the age of thirty-one, was appointed, in 1776, Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, for sixteen years he was its Attorney-general, and, when he died in 1808, Governor of that State. Eben, also a lawyer, rose to the rank of major in the continental army, serving with distinction. From the only daughter, Mrs. Hardy, descended the late Governor Wells of Maine, and John Sullivan Wells of the United States Senate from New Hampshire.

John, the third son, and subject of this memoir, born in 1740, was carefully educated by his father, and, after a voyage to the West Indies, entered the law-office of Judge Livermore at Portsmouth. His success in his profession placed him early among its leaders in his native State. By his earnest and eloquent denunciations of parliamentary encroachments on the chartered rights of the province, and spirited contributions to the public press, he attracted attention and became popular. He early exhibited a taste for military science, was familiar with all the great historical battles, and, holding from 1772 the rank of major under the crown, he drilled his neighbors in successive squads and companies, until they became efficient soldiers.

He was sent to the first continental Congress, in September, 1774, as representative from New Hampshire. He drafted at least one of its important papers, took his share in its debates, and, in opposing the motion of Dickinson for another appeal to the King, with an eloquence eliciting high praise from John Adams. When at home in December, he participated in the attack on the fort near Portsmouth. The powder and arms captured were removed, at his charge, to Durham, where they were concealed under the pulpit of the church opposite his dwelling, and subsequently used at Bunker Hill. Returning to Congress, he was appointed one of the eight brigadiers who with Washington, in July, took command of the army engaged in the siege of Boston; his brigade and that of General Greene forming the division of General Lee at Medford and Charlestown, which constituted the left wing of the American army. He was twice sent to Portsmouth to fortify and

protect that place from British cruisers ; and when, in January, the withdrawal of the Connecticut troops, whose term of enlistment had expired, imperilled the safety of the army, his influence and earnest appeals brought down from New Hampshire two thousand men to replace them.

After the evacuation of Boston by the British, in March, 1776, General Sullivan marched his brigade by Providence to New York. Despatched thence to Canada, he extricated the army, seven thousand in number, prostrate with disease and beset by greatly superior forces, from a position threatening its destruction ; receiving from his officers, amongst whom were many of the most distinguished in the subsequent campaigns, high commendation for his services. At Long Island, now Major-General, with Lord Stirling and MacDougall for his brigadiers, he commanded on the left of the outer line in the battle, where, after contending, as well as circumstances permitted, for three hours, with twenty-two thousand British and Hessians, Lord Stirling, who gained great honor on that day for his defence on the right, and himself were taken prisoners. With the approval of General Washington, he submitted to Congress Lord Howe's overtures for negotiation. Exchanged for General Prescott, he rejoined the army in season to take part in the masterly movements in West Chester to baffle General Howe in his efforts to take our troops at disadvantage. Howe withdrew to New York, sorely pressed by Sullivan, who, for his services on the occasion, received in general orders the acknowledgments of the Commander-in-chief.

After Lee was captured, on December 13, 1776, as next in command Sullivan marched his army to join Washington, and with him, Christmas night, crossed the Delaware through the ice. After a night's march, in command of the right wing, he entered Trenton at eight in the morning at the head of his troops. Rahl, the Hessian commander, was mortally wounded, and nearly a thousand prisoners were taken. A few days later, at Princeton, Sullivan drove the fortieth and fifty-fifth regiments from the town. During the rest of the winter, in front of the American lines at Morristown, he kept vigilant

watch over the movements of the enemy, checking their marauds and confining them within their entrenchments.

Whilst waiting the following August for intelligence of the movements of Howe, who had quitted New York and sailed south with a large portion of his troops, Sullivan, learning that several regiments lay exposed along the shores of Staten Island, planned an expedition to capture them. He ordered Colonel Ogden to cross at the old Blazing Star tavern with two regiments to surprise Colonel Lawrence; Smallwood and De Borre at Halstead's Point to attack Colonel Barton, and Buskirk at the Dutch church. Ignorant or treacherous guides led astray some of the columns in the darkness of the night, and, although many prisoners were captured, the result fell short of expectation. A court of inquiry, composed of Stirling, Knox, and MacDougall, decided that the expedition was eligible and well concerted, and would have succeeded but for accidents not to be foreseen or prevented, and that the conduct of General Sullivan, in planning and executing the expedition, deserved the approbation of the country and not its censure. Their judgment was confirmed by Congress.

Four days after the descent on Staten Island, Howe landed on the Chesapeake at the head of Elk River with nearly twenty thousand troops. Sullivan proceeded without delay to join Washington on the Brandywine, thirty miles below Philadelphia. He was posted in command of the right wing, composed of his own division under De Borre, Stirling's and Stephen's, on the north bank up the river, with Hazen's regiment still higher up; Washington, with Greene and Maxwell, lying lower down, opposite Chad's Ford. On the eleventh of September, Howe was at Kennet Square, seven miles from the river, and, whilst Knyphausen made a feigned attack on Maxwell, marched his army through dense woods in a thick fog, and, crossing above the forks, where Hazen was stationed, came down the north bank about two in the afternoon.

Sullivan instantly proceeded with his own division to join Stirling and Stephen, who, being nearer head-quarters, were earlier notified and already in line. The three divisions, hardly

five thousand strong, boldly contested the ground for two hours against thrice their numbers, "fifty-five minutes nearly muzzle to muzzle." De Borre's division had been headed off by the enemy in their approach, and some confusion resulted from his not obeying orders; but the battle was hotly contested, and the loss that day sustained by the enemy, as shown by rolls captured at Germantown, exceeded two thousand.* When the right wing, that bore the brunt of the conflict, finally gave way, Sullivan, taking command of Weeden's brigade, joined Greene, who had come up double quick from below, and the battle continued till nightfall, Sullivan having his horse shot under him. The retreat of the army was effectually secured and the enemy discouraged from pursuit.

Five days later, the two armies were confronted at Goshen; but an engagement was prevented by a violent storm, and Howe proceeded on his way to Philadelphia. Mr. Burke of North Carolina, who had gone out to see the battle, hearkened to the prejudiced accounts of persons hostile to Sullivan, and in Congress spoke disparagingly of his course. Whereupon his companions in arms, Laurens, Hamilton, Lafayette, and all whose opinions were of value, bore willing witness to his coolness, courage, and judicious dispositions throughout the day; and he was entirely exonerated by Washington from another charge, that of want of vigilance in learning earlier the approach of the enemy. Mr. Burke later acknowledged his mistake.

No suitable accommodation being found for the British troops in Philadelphia, they were encamped six miles out, at Germantown. The American army left Matuchin Hills at nine on the evening of the third of October, for a night-march of fourteen miles to attack them. Sullivan commanded the right wing, Greene the left. The former reached Chestnut Hill at daybreak, and, attacking the advanced posts, drove them back, and, pushing on nearly two miles below the Chew House, he encountered the left wing of the British, and a severe conflict ensued. Ordering his troops to advance, when the moment

* This English habit of understating loss sustained by them in battle of life or limb is as old as Cressy, Athenry, and Hallidon Hill.

arrived, the enemy broke ; making a stand, however, wherever ground or wall permitted. Sullivan sent word to Washington of his success, and requesting that Wayne should be ordered forward to attack the enemy's right ; General Greene, who had a larger circuit to make, having been delayed. A British force had taken possession of the Chew House, which was of stone, and Washington and Knox had halted there to reduce it, but even artillery made little impression upon its solid walls. Sullivan was still pushing on, when, Wayne being ordered back to the Chew House, his left flank became exposed to the enemy, who were rallying in large numbers. The morning was foggy ; and, in the obscurity from this cause and the smoke of the battle, Stephen's division fired upon Wayne's. The troops, in their three hours' combat, had expended their ammunition, when an alarm that they were surrounded created a panic, and the army retired with victory in their grasp. They made good their retreat with little loss. Washington, in his report to Congress, accorded high praise to General Sullivan. Among the killed were his two aids, White and Sherburn.

During the ensuing winter, Sullivan remained at Valley Forge engaged in building a bridge over the Schuylkill. In April, he was placed in command of the department of Rhode Island. France had taken a deep interest in the strife between England and her colonies. Some vexation throughout all classes of the nation was natural at the loss of Canada ; there were seething, besides, in the popular mind sentiments in sympathy with resistance to oppression, and thus both king and people favorably inclined towards the colonies in their strike for independence. Aid was secretly extended, arms and money furnished ; and, after Bennington and Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, in October, 1777, France recognized our existence as a nation, and, in February, signed the treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive. The welcome tidings reached Providence a few days after Sullivan's arrival there, and were celebrated with fitting expression of the general gratification they afforded. In July, D'Estaing, with twelve ships of the line and four frigates with four thousand land troops on board, after a

long voyage of eighty-seven days, arrived off the coast. The British had evacuated Philadelphia, sustaining a serious discomfiture if not an actual defeat at Monmouth, in traversing New Jersey, and were already concentrated in New York, when, on the eleventh of July, the French fleet reached Sandy Hook with intent of attacking the place. Not finding it practicable to cross the bars or pass the batteries that guarded the channel up to the city without pilots, it was concluded that D'Estaing should co-operate with Sullivan against Newport, the garrison of which was re-enforced on the seventeenth to the number of seven thousand men. Sullivan, receiving information of the final decision on the twenty-third, lost no time in carrying out the instructions of Washington. By earnest appeals to the neighboring States, with fifteen hundred men from the main army, he collected together in two weeks nine thousand men, not very well armed and with little experience in war, only fifteen hundred of whom had ever been in action. He had with him, however, Greene, Lafayette, Cornell, Varnum, and Glover, all able and experienced general officers; and Crane, Gridley, and Gouvion, distinguished engineers.

On the thirtieth of July, D'Estaing arrived off Point Judith, and Sullivan went on board to concert measures of co-operation. Two vessels were sent without delay round Conanicut to capture three regiments on that island, but they were at once withdrawn. Three other vessels were sent into the east passage to cover the crossing of the American troops, and three British vessels of less force stationed there were set on fire and destroyed; and, on the fifth, five other frigates in the west passage were burnt or sunk. On the eighth, D'Estaing forced the main or middle passage and moored opposite the town, but behind Rose and Goat Islands; and on that day, the troops expected by Sullivan arriving from Boston, and Butt's Hill, which commanded Howland's Ferry on to the island, the best place for crossing, being evacuated, Sullivan, on the ninth, crossed over with a large portion of his army, leaving at Tiverton a certain number which it had been proposed should join D'Estaing under Lafayette, who that

morning proceeded to the fleet with information of what had been done.

The French troops were already partly in the boats, partly ashore on Conanicut, whence, near Lawton's Valley, they were to cross on to the main island, when an English fleet hove in sight. No time was lost in re-embarking the men and making the necessary dispositions for action. D'Estaing could not tell but that Byron, at the time expected daily from Europe, was there as well as Howe. The north wind springing up the next morning, he went in pursuit; but the storm on the twelfth dispersed both fleets, dismasted two of the French ships, and when D'Estaing came back on the twentieth it was to inform Sullivan he must go round to Boston to refit. The Americans were not in strength to attack the place without aid from the French; the road was now open for re-enforcements and for the English fleet to intercept their crossing; and three thousand volunteers went off on the twenty-eighth. No alternative remained but to withdraw to the north end of the island, which was effected that night. The next day took place what Lafayette pronounced the best fought battle of the war, between equal numbers, five thousand on either side: the British loss, according to the best accounts, exceeding a thousand killed, wounded, and prisoners.* As officers and men alike did their duty, it would be out of place to ascribe to the general in command any particular credit: it belonged alike to them all. Next day, Clinton arrived with five thousand British troops; but Sullivan, who had despatched Lafayette to Boston to induce D'Estaing to come down by land, had learned that this was not practicable, and already crossed back to the main. At a subsequent page, in another connection, reference will be made to other incidents in the Rhode Island campaign, for the purpose of correcting erroneous impressions with regard to them.

In 1779, little could be attempted. The French fleet was in the West Indies. The resources of the country were completely drained, and the English seemed indisposed to be active; but General Sullivan at the head of a force of nearly

* See note, page 9.

four thousand men entered the Indian territory to retaliate for the massacre of Wyoming, and by burning their villages and plantations to deter the Indians from molesting our frontiers. The only encounter with them was at Newtown, which they speedily evacuated. Fatigues and exposures on this expedition undermined the health of General Sullivan; and, warned by his physician, he sent in his resignation, and in December left the army.

The following letter of Washington shows the estimation in which he was held by his Commander-in-chief; who, with Greene, Lafayette, Stirling, MacDougall, Stark, and many of the noblest leaders in the war were ever his steadfast friends:—

“It is unnecessary for me to repeat to you how high a place you hold in my esteem. The confidence you have experienced, and the manner in which you have been employed on several important occasions, testify the value I set upon your military qualifications, and the regret I must feel, that circumstances have deprived the army of your services. The pleasure I shall always take in an interchange of good offices, in whatever station you may hereafter be placed, will be the best confirmation of my personal regard.”

As he was recovering from dangerous and painful illness he was chosen to Congress from New Hampshire, and for reasons hereafter stated declined; but, yielding to the earnest request of the Committee of Safety, finally consented. He went to Philadelphia in August, 1780, and remained a year. We have reserved for a different connection the account of the service he there rendered to the cause. He labored zealously and unremittingly to do his part, and the journals and his correspondence show with what effect. Some of the older members would have preferred that affairs should have been still administered by committees; but heads of departments were substituted, and for this and other important reforms he exerted his influence. He was proposed as a candidate for the war department; but he had no wish for the office, even if his independent course had not precluded the likelihood of his election.

The next few years, as Attorney-general of New Hampshire, an office held by himself, son, and grandson for half a century ; as Major-general, in which function he made the military force of the State, twenty thousand men, effective by a system of drill and discipline, important from its nearness to the frontier, and as renewal of the war was at times anticipated ; as Speaker of the Assembly and Chief Executive of the State, to which position he was thrice chosen ; as President of the Convention to ratify the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, brought about, it was said, mainly by his influence and efforts ; as one of the most energetic in putting down the rebellion of 1786 ; as doing what he could to introduce manufacturing industry into the south-east section of the State, now one of its busiest centres in the world ; and in performance of his duties as Federal Judge, — he did whatever was in his power to develop the country, shape its institutions, and promote its welfare.

He died comparatively young, — at the age of fifty-four, — of disease contracted by exposure in the war, at his home in Durham, which remained that of his widow till her death in 1820. With this brief sketch of the leading events of his life, the reader will be better able to appreciate the injustice of seeking to attach to his memory the reproach proposed by his calumniator. His extensive correspondence, contributions to the press, when, as candidate for office, he refuted every charge brought against him, though this particular charge that he was a pensioner of Luzerne, never was dreamt of, acquaint us with every important incident of his public career, financial condition, and traits of character. Prejudice and ill-nature may be safely challenged for proof or reason to believe that he was other than upright and honorable in all his dealings, otherwise than faithful to every obligation. It seems difficult to account for the perversity that, without one particle of evidence, can construe a simple loan of three hundred dollars, such as he had made himself to others, and certainly to one French officer not repaid for many years, into any indication of corrupt motive.

From this brief sketch of the leading incidents in his career,

our readers will be better able to understand the nature of the charge now for the first time brought against his integrity, and to judge if in the utter absence of any evidence to prove it there is the slightest probability or possibility of its being true. It will now be stated, and appeal is made with entire confidence to the candor of the public, if the actual circumstances warrant any such imputation.

In the tenth volume of the History of the United States, recently published, is found, at page 502, the passage, "That New Hampshire abandoned the claim to the fisheries was due to Sullivan, who at the time was a pensioner of Luzerne."* Why Sullivan opposed making the concession of the fisheries a condition of peace was explained by himself in 1785. In the canvass for the presidency of New Hampshire from 1784 to 1789, in three of which years he was elected, John Langdon being his competitor, whatever could be said with any plausibility by their respective partisans to the prejudice of the opposite candidate, after the fashion of the times was improved to influence the result. His vote on the fisheries was not overlooked, and became subject of comment in the public press. In explanation of the reasons which governed him in his vote, he says that the general instructions to our ministers respecting the fisheries remained the same as they were first formed before he went to Congress in August, 1780. Independence was the great ultimatum, and the general instructions directed the negotiators to secure our right of fisheries on the banks. Whilst in Congress Franklin, Jay, Jefferson, and Laurens were added to Adams as commissioners of peace. It was moved, in the course of the debate on their powers, that the fisheries should be made an additional article of the ultimatum, which he opposed, as it was already included in their general instructions, and he thought it unwise to fetter ministers who could

* The passage, page 452, "that, with the aid of Sullivan of New Hampshire, who was in the pay of France, instructions such as Vergennes might have drafted were first agreed upon," needs no other answer than that made to what is quoted in the text. As to the fisheries, the instructions were not changed whilst Sullivan was in Congress, and it would have been folly and breach of faith to propose terms to which France or Vergennes objected.

better judge what could be judiciously insisted upon. To quote his own language:—

“With respect to the second charge, I can only say, that the general and secret instructions to our ministers respecting the fishery remained the same as they were first formed, years before I went to Congress in 1780. The secret instructions made the independence of the thirteen United States, and every part of them,—the grand ultimatum of a peace; and the general instructions, among other things, directed them to secure our right of fishery on the banks.

“When I was in Congress, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Jay, Governor Jefferson, and Mr. Laurens were added to Mr. Adams. New instructions were framed, but no alteration made respecting the fishery. It was indeed moved by a member that the fishery should be made an additional article of the ultimatum, to which I, among others, objected, and thought our general instructions to our ministers on that head were sufficient to show the wishes of Congress; that their own inclinations would prompt them to use every possible effort to secure it; and that it would be dangerous for Congress, at so great a distance, who could not possibly know the disposition of the European powers, to dictate positively the articles of peace, and thereby fetter ministers who, in my opinion, had as much zeal for the American interest, and had more knowledge of what we could or could not obtain, than all Congress together. Besides, let the articles agreed to, be as they might, they could not be binding on Congress until ratified by them. Every person must know that the capture of General Lincoln and his army was owing to the positive orders of Congress to keep possession of Charlestown.

“And I confess myself to be one of those who had rather trust the command of an army to a good general on the ground than to a Congress at five hundred miles’ distance; and the making a peace to five of the greatest characters in America than to a Congress at three thousand miles’ distance; especially as, after all, Congress could approve or disapprove, as they thought proper.

“There never was a question in Congress whether the fishery should be given up; and if there had, I should have been the last man in America to have yielded it to Britain; but I could not see the necessity of making it an additional article in our ultimatum. Our right to fish on Jaffrey’s Ledge, and off Boon Island and the Isle of Shoals, were not articles of the ultimatum, yet we were never in danger of losing it.

"When the instructions 'Honestus' alludes to were made out, great part of New York and Virginia, and the whole of Georgia, were in possession of the enemy; we were without money, our paper currency had vanished, and our army was revolting; a change against us, even before our instructions arrived, was at least possible. Had Arnold's plan succeeded; had Greene been defeated in the South; had Washington been unsuccessful against Cornwallis; had the French fleet been blocked up in the Chesapeake by the British; had Britain obtained a decisive naval victory over our allies; had Russia and Germany, or even the former, declared in favor of Britain, we might have been compelled to accept terms less favorable than we obtained. Either of those events was possible; and yet our ministers obtained not a single point but what they were instructed to insist on. But as the events of war were uncertain, I acknowledge, and glory in the confession, that I was one of those who objected to fettering our ministers, and positively to dictate orders of peace, to five gentlemen who were in my opinion, more than equal in the business of negotiation to all the members then on the floor of Congress."

Jay was of the same opinion as himself, and enough more to defeat the motion, and leave the commissioners under their general instructions, which covered the fisheries as finally conceded in the articles.

The statement implies that he was influenced in his vote by being a pensioner of Luzerne. All that has been transmitted of that minister renders it improbable that he ever sought to tamper with the integrity of members of Congress. It could not well have escaped detection if he had, and would have led to his disgraceful expulsion from his post. What his character and conduct were may be gathered from the following biographical notice of him.

Born in 1741, after having served in the seven years' war, in which he rose to the rank of colonel, he abandoned the military career, resumed his studies, and, turning his views to diplomacy, was sent in 1776 envoy extraordinary to Bavaria, and distinguished himself in the negotiations which took place in regard to the Bavarian succession. In 1778 he was appointed to succeed Gerard as minister to the United States, and conducted himself during five years he remained with a prudence,

wisdom, and concern for their interests that gained him the esteem and affection of the Americans. In 1780, when the army was in the most destitute condition, and the government without resources, he raised money on his own responsibility, and without waiting for orders from his court to relieve the distress. He exerted himself to raise private subscriptions, and placed his own name at the head. In 1783 he returned to France, having received the most flattering expressions of esteem from Congress, and in 1788 was sent an ambassador to London, where he remained till his death in 1791. When the Federal Government was organized, Jefferson the Secretary of the State by order of Washington made Luzerne an express acknowledgment of his services, and the sense entertained of them by the nation.

As the proceedings of Congress were with closed doors, the proposition to couple two such incongruous and disproportionate matters in the ultimatum of negotiation as independence and the fisheries was too inappropriate to be anticipated, and Luzerne could not have been present either to dictate or consult. The insinuation of the historian, that General Sullivan opposed it or voted against it in accordance with his wishes, or in requital for the loan, is simply absurd. The motion certainly deserved to be voted down as it was, and not only Jay, but many members of unquestionable wisdom, integrity, and unswerving devotion to the interests of their country, voted with him. New Hampshire, neither by that vote nor by any other, ever abandoned the fisheries, for they were in the general instructions with boundaries, indemnities, and like points for negotiation. To couple them with independence in the ultimatum would have turned a solemn proceeding into a jest.

Besides what advantage could it have been either to France or Spain, that their inveterate enemy and rival should retain a monopoly of her fisheries,—both Catholic lands, peculiarly dependent on a plentiful supply of their Lenten food. Even during the war American fishermen went freighted to their ports with the treasures of the sea, which were to prove an important equivalent in the new markets opened to them here by national

gratitude for their commodities of silk and wine. The fallacy of the statement of the historian is sufficiently obvious to whoever is conversant with what it signifies ; but, to readers not as familiar with the actual condition of affairs, an erroneous impression may be conveyed. It is enough to say that, as this is the only instance cited or evidence advanced of any act or word that could have been influenced by the loan, the charge is not only unsustained, but words fail to express the enormity of this attempt, with such an entire absence of proof, to tarnish the memory of one of our patriots, ever honest and honorable in all his transactions public and private, to the great distress of his descendants.

General Sullivan when in 1774, at the age of thirty-four, elected to the First Congress, was busily occupied in his professional pursuits. Mr. Adams, in June of that year, mentions in a letter to Mrs. Adams, in speaking of General Sullivan's success at the bar, that he was said to have already accumulated by his practice and judicious investments, ten thousand pounds, represented by farms and seven mills, which were his delight and profit. From the rapid depreciation of the currency and unavoidable expenses attending the war, whatever available resources he had were exhausted, and when with shattered constitution he left the army, December, 1779, after five years' constant exposure, he was sore pressed, as his lands were unsalable, for means to provide for his wife and children. He says in 1785 that he had never received but the nominal sum in paper for his services, being the only officer in America who had received no depreciation or allowance therefor. There was due to him when he resigned, as back pay, thirty months' allowance as commander of a separate department and for money advanced, in all five thousand dollars, no part of which was paid him before September, 1781, after he had been a year in Congress. Although fifteen hundred dollars was then voted him for the advances he had made, not wishing to take what was needed for the pressing needs of the country, he received only two hundred in cash from the treasury. The rest was paid in a draft on New Hampshire, which was not realized by him till some time after.

He had hardly left the service, recovered from illness induced by his late campaign, and resumed his practice, when he was again elected without his knowledge as the representative in Congress from his State. From a sense of obligation to his family, he declined, but urgently solicited by the Committee of Safety, on the plea that public interests demanded the sacrifice, he consented to go. All they could promise him was one dollar a day, and all in their power to pay was two hundred and two dollars before his return.

The Vermont controversy was pending before Congress between New York and New Hampshire, and the inhabitants of the territory, and fifty-four townships, between one and two millions of acres east of the Connecticut, not embraced in Mason's patent, or line sixty miles from the sea, depended on the decision, and might be lost to the State. As a lawyer, and most familiar with the evidence, it was important he should be there to defend the case, not as paid counsel, but as a Member of Congress. He argued it on different points of the questions involved on more than twenty different occasions against the ablest counsel opposed to him, and accomplished the main object, the preservation to New Hampshire of its fifty-four townships, Vermont being left where it belonged to the inhabitants, neither New York nor New Hampshire being able to show any valid claim.

It was a busy session, and he took his full share of the debates and on committees. In reorganizing the finances and establishing the Bank of America, in instituting reforms in the army and civil administration, which instilled fresh vigor into the cause, he was active and energetic; and what was done that year at Philadelphia rendered possible the success, which the next in the Southern campaign and at Yorktown secured independence. His influence also materially aided to quell the mutinous spirit in the army, being chairman of the committee to bring back to their allegiance the Pennsylvania line. If he had deserted a post where he was useful from any false pride or delicacy or fear of misconception, he would have deserved the censure the historian

seems eager to attach to him. At the close of a letter to Luzerne, January 13, 1781, giving an account of the revolt and its termination, he says: "One circumstance ought not to be omitted which, in my judgment, does the insurgents much honor. When they delivered up the British emissaries, Governor Reed offered them one hundred golden guineas, which they refused, saying that what they did was only a duty they owed to their country, and that they neither wanted nor would receive any reward but the approbation of that country for which they had so often fought and bled." It is difficult to believe that General Sullivan would have used this language had he been conscious of any impropriety on his part, or addressed it to Luzerne, to whom it would have been a tacit reproach, if the minister had been guilty of what the historian imputes, an attempt to bribe him to be faithless.

Unless convinced that his back pay and advances could have been relied upon to meet the unavoidable expenses attending his residence in Philadelphia, he doubtless would have persisted in declining a position in which pecuniary favors, even from a friend, might compromise his delicacy, shackle his independence, or to ungenerous minds afford a handle for misconstruction or misrepresentation.

Their payment was deferred not from any doubt as to their validity and justice, — the committee in September, 1781, allowed more than he asked for his advances, — but in consequence of the exhausted state of its treasury and inability on the part of the government. Left wholly without resources, if Luzerne, who, as there seems reason to believe from the above notice of him, was noble and generous, and with whom his late rank in the army, knowledge of French, and personal qualities led naturally to an intimacy, was willing to extend him his aid, it was his right to accept it, and no honorable mind familiar with his condition would think of making it a reproach. Application by the descendants of General Sullivan to the historian for a statement of the evidence on which he grounds his allegation, resulted in his reply that it was on a circumstantial report from Luzerne to Vergennes, without stating what that report was.

Upon a second application for the proofs if he had any of the charge, they were informed that, if a copyist were sent to the house of the historian in Washington, a copy could be taken. This is now submitted to the public, with the confident assertion that it in no measure or degree sustains the charge that he was in the pay of Luzerne, unless the acceptance of a loan voluntarily offered in his distress, unattended by any other condition, expectation, or tacit understanding, except of repayment when he had the means, warrants the expression used. There is not the slightest evidence of corruption or any improper or indelicate act or motive, but directly of the reverse. The whole tenor of the letter throughout proves him thoroughly faithful to every obligation, honest and true, inaccessible to any corrupt influence, fearless of whom he offended in the discharge of his congressional duty, devoted to the cause of independence, unswerving in his fidelity to his State and country. It proves that in the darkest day of the struggle, when success seemed more than ever remote, and failure involved confiscation and perhaps death on the scaffold for the leaders, no proffers of rank or wealth as a reward for returning to his allegiance to Great Britain were the slightest temptation to him. If he had entertained for a moment the propositions of General Clinton, he certainly would not have selected the representative of France for his confident. The translation of the document has been made by one who had resided many years in France, and was printed under the supervision of the publishing committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The letter is as follows:—

Lettre de M. de la Luzerne à M. de Vergennes.

PHILADELPHIA, le 13 mai 1781.

MONSIEUR, — Lorsque la malle aux lettres de Philadelphia fut interceptée l'année dernière et que les Anglais publièrent quelques-unes de celles qu'ils y avaient trouvées, j'en remarquai une d'un Délégué qui se plaignait du dénûment où son État le laissait et de la cherté de toutes les choses nécessaires à la vie dans Philadelphia, et j'eus l'honneur de vous en envoyer la traduction. Dès cette époque il me parut nécessaire d'ouvrir ma bourse à ce Délégué, dont l'Ennemi connaissait les besoins

par sa propre confession, et sous l'apparence d'un prêt, je lui remis 68 guinées 4 septièmes. Une seconde malle interceptée a mis les Anglais en possession d'une lettre qui lui est adressée par le Trésorier de son État et qu'ils ont imprimée. Elle est également relative à des besoins pécuniaires. Le G^r Clinton a soupçonné qu'un homme aussi pressé d'argent pouvait être disposé à se laisser corrompre, et comme il avait un frère prisonnier à New Yorck, il a permis à ce dernier de venir à Philadelphia sous prétexte de solliciter son échange; le Délégué est venu me trouver et m'a confié que son frère lui avait remis une lettre nou signée mais qu'il a reconnu à l'écriture pour être du Colonel Anglais qui est actuellement à New Yorck. "L'auteur de cette lettre," m'a-t-il dit, "après s'être étendu sur les ressources de l'Angleterre, sur les moyens qu'elle a de soumettre à la fin l'Amérique, me fait de grands complimens sur mes lumières, mes talens et l'estime que les Anglais ont conçu pour moi, il ajoute qu'ils me regardent comme l'homme le plus propre à moyenner une réconciliation entre la Mère patrie et les Colonies Anglaises et qu'ils désirent que je leur expose mon sentiment sur cette matière, que toutes les ouvertures de ma part seraient reçues avec la reconnaissance qu'elles méritent, que je n'ai qu'à dire ce que je désire, que la personne qui m'écrit a tout pouvoir d'ouvrir une négociation particulière avec moi, et que je puis compter sur le plus profond secret. J'ai répondu à mon frère avec toute l'indignation que m'inspirait de pareilles avances, j'ai jeté devant lui la lettre au feu, et lorsqu'il est parti pour New Yorck je l'ai prié de témoigner à ceux qui l'envoyaient que leurs offres avaient été reçues avec le plus profond mépris. J'ai cependant gardé le silence vis-à-vis du Congrès sur l'aventure, soit pour ne pas compromettre mon frère, soit pour ne pas faire parade de mon désintéressement, soit parceque j'ai trouvé dangereux d'annoncer avec trop d'authenticité à mes Collègues que l'Ennemi cherche un traître parmi eux, et que sa récompense est prête; mais j'ai cru devoir vous confier ces détails afin de vous mettre en garde contre les intrigues de l'Ennemi jusques dans le sein du Congrès parceque s'ils ont osé faire de pareilles offres à moi, dont l'attachement à la bonne cause est aussi généralement connu, il n'est que trop possible qu'ils en aient fait à d'autres qui ne viendront point vous en faire part." Le fond de cette confidence m'a paru vrai, Mgr., mais je ne suis pas aussi persuadé que ce Délégué ait chargé son frère de porter à New Yorck une réponse, aussi fière et aussi insultante pour les Anglais qu'il me l'assure. Il m'a même fait une proposition tout à fait singulière, c'est de feindre de prêter l'oreille aux ouvertures qui lui sont faites, d'en-

voyer un homme affidé à New York demander au G^r Clinton un projet de conciliation, en ajoutant qu'il n'a pas voulu se servir du ministère de son frère parcequ'il craint son attachement à l'indépendance. Je trouve, m'a-t-il dit divers avantages à sonder de la sorte les dispositions des Anglais afin de connaître quel peut être leur plan de corruption et de savoir jusqu'où ils se proposent d'aller dans leurs concessions, et il m'a nommé quatre membres du Congrès, auxquels il se proposait de confier son projet avant de l'exécuter, et qui sont tous gens d'un caractère éprouvé.

Le Délégué jouit lui-même d'une excellente réputation et je répugne infiniment à soupçonner qu'il voudrait me faire servir de moteur à une correspondance avec l'ennemi ; mais il m'a si souvent parlé des pertes que la révolution lui a occasionnées, il regrette si amèrement son ancienne aisance, que j'ai craint pour lui la tentation à laquelle il voulait s'exposer, et je n'ai pas balancé à le détourner du projet en lui exposant sans déguisement les grands inconvénients qu'il entraîne. Il ne m'a pas promis formellement d'y renoncer, mais, si malgré les représentations que je me suis proposé de lui réitérer, il y persistait je surveillerais de si près sa conduite, que j'espère découvrir tout ce qu'elle aura de bonté. Au reste je l'ai constamment bien disposé à être très confiant, et c'est à lui toujours que j'attribue la rupture de la ligue formée par les États de l'Est, ligue, qui par de fausses idées de popularité, de liberté et par une jalousie excessive de l'armée et du G^r en Chef a longtemps arrêté les mesures les plus urgentes et qui en nombre d'occasions s'est montrée également jalouse de nos avantages et de notre influence. Il jouit de beaucoup de considération dans son État, il eut le crédit de le déterminer à se déclarer pour l'indépendance en 1776. C'est le seul État qui n'ait pas encore fixé sa forme de Gouvernement, et comme ce retard a de grands inconvénients, et laisse aux mal intentionnés l'espérance de voir le rétablissement du Gouvernement Anglais, il m'a promis dès qu'il y retournera d'employer tout son crédit sur le peuple pour l'engager à se donner une constitution.

J'ignore combien de temps il doit encore rester dans le Congrès, mais j'ai pensé que vous ne désapprouverez pas que je fisse l'offre que je lui ai fait l'année dernière, aussi longtemps qu'il sera Délégué, et ma proposition a été très bien accueillie. Dans toutes les suppositions il est intéressant de le ménager. Il est bien fâcheux que plusieurs autres Délégués se trouvent dans une situation encore plus nécessitante. Ceux du Sud, dont les États sont envahis, n'ont d'autre ressource que de

NOTE. — "Moteur," in 12th line, a mistake of copyist for "manteau"; "bonté," in 20th, should read "louche"; words "continuer tous les six mois le prêt que je lui," should follow the word "lui" in 36th.

recevoir du Congrès un traitement pour leur Subsistance, et ce traitement est si borné que l'un d'eux qui a été précédemment Gouverneur de Georgie est réduit à soustraire sa femme de la société, faute d'habits sous lesquelles elle puisse paraître décemment.

Cette tentative des Anglais m'a donné occasion de demander au Délégué à qui ils se sont adressés, si la longue habitude qu'il a du Congrès et la manière de voter de ses collègues lui avaient donné lieu de soupçonner quelqu'un d'eux de corruption, il m'a indiqué celui contre lequel j'ai d'anciens soupçons et un autre dont le caractère lui paraît également douteux ; mais à ces deux exceptions près, il croit le Congrès composé de gens d'un caractère sûr et inaccessible à la séduction.

Je joins ici Mgr. la traduction d'un pamphlet publié contre M. Duane membre du Congrès pour New York, le jour même où ce Délégué a quitté Philadelphia pour se rendre dans son État. Il a été inséré dans une Gazette dont le Rédacteur a annoncé qu'il enchérissait sur ses Collègues quant à la licence avec laquelle leurs papiers sont écrits, et que la torture seule ou la formalité de lois lui arracherait les noms de ceux qui se serviraient de son journal pour publier leurs productions. On attribue l'écrit dont il s'agit à Mr. le Gouverneur Morris, qui avait Siégé dans cette assemblée jusqu'à la fin de 1779 comme Délégué de ce même État. Les faits allégués sont reconnus vrais, mais je crois que Mr. Duane a depuis longtemps abandonné les principes équivoques qui ont réglé sa conduite pendant les premières années de cette révolution, et je l'ai trouvé constamment attaché à l'indépendance.

J'attendrai vos ordres Mgr. pour porter les avances dont il est question dans cette Dépêche sur mes états de dépenses extraordinaires. Le Sr. Payne dont j'ai eu l'honneur de vous parler précédemment et sur qui je pensais qu'on pourrait jeter les yeux pour écrire l'histoire de la révolution actuelle, est passé en France au mois de février dernier sur la frigate *l'Alliance*.

Les deux vaisseaux expédiés de Cadix avec des habits pour l'armée Américaine sont heureusement arrivés à Boston.

Je suis & &

Signé

LE CH. DE LA LUZERNE.

Le Délégué dont il s'agit au Commencement de cette dépêche, Mgr. est le Général Sullivan qui représente au Congrès l'État de New Hampshire.

The same in English.

PHILADELPHIA, May 13, 1781.

MY LORD,—When the Philadelphia mail was intercepted last year, and the English published some of the letters which they found in it, I noticed one from a delegate, who complained of the destitute condition in which he was left by his State, and of the dearness of all necessaries of life in Philadelphia, and I had the honor to send you a translation of it. From this time, it seemed to me necessary to open my purse to this delegate, whose wants the enemy knew by his own confession; and, under the semblance of a loan,* I advanced him 68 guineas and 4 sevenths. A second intercepted mail put the English into possession of a letter addressed to him by the Treasurer of his State, which they have printed. It also relates to his pecuniary needs. General Clinton suspected that a man so pressed for money might be open to corruption; and as he had a brother, a prisoner in New York, he allowed the latter to come to Philadelphia, under pretext of soliciting his exchange.† The delegate came to me, and confided to me that his brother had given him a letter, not signed, but which he recognized by the handwriting to be from an English colonel who is now in New York. “The author of this letter,” he said to me, “after expatiating upon the resources of England and the means she possesses of subjugating America finally, pays me great compliments upon my intelligence, talents, and upon the esteem in which I am held by the English, and adds that they look upon me as the most proper person to bring about a reconciliation between the mother country and the English colonies, and they desire me to make known to them my sentiments in the matter; that all overtures on my part will be received with the gratitude which they deserve; that I have only to give expression to my wishes; that the person who writes to me has full power to open

* So far as General Sullivan was concerned, this implies that it was offered as a loan and accepted as a loan. If then or later no return was expected by M. Luzerne, there is no evidence or reason to believe that General Sullivan did not intend to return it, or that he did not actually do so.

† As Daniel Sullivan was loyal throughout to the cause of independence, and his life sacrificed to it in the Jersey hulks, he was not likely to have been party or privy to Clinton’s “pretext.” What General Sullivan proposed as a reason to be assigned to Clinton for employing a trusty person other than Daniel, that he fears his attachment to independence, shows he could not have had knowledge of the contents of the letter from New York before it was opened or of the proposition it contained.

a private negotiation with me; and that I may count upon the most profound secrecy. I answered my brother with all the indignation which such advances were calculated to inspire. I threw the letter into the fire before him, and, when he left for New York, I begged him to declare to those who sent him that their offers had been received with the most profound contempt. I said nothing to Congress about this affair, partly not to compromise my brother, partly not to make a parade of my disinterestedness, partly because it seemed dangerous to announce with too much confidence to my colleagues that the enemy sought a traitor among them and that his recompense was ready. But I thought it my duty to confide to you these details, in order to put you upon your guard against the intrigues which the enemy is carrying into the very centre of Congress; because if they dared make such offers to me, whose attachment to the good cause is so generally known, it is only too possible that they have made them to others who may not come forward to tell you of them."

What he confided to me has seemed substantially true, my Lord, but I am not as convinced that this delegate charged his brother to carry to New York so proud and insulting a reply to the English as he said he had done. He even made me a very singular proposition: it was to feign to listen to the overtures which were made to him, to send to New York a trusty messenger to ask from General Clinton a plan of reconciliation, in adding* that he did not wish to avail himself of the intervention of his brother, because he fears his attachment to Independence. "I find," said he to me, "several advantages in sounding in this way the disposition of the English, so as to know what may be their plan of corruption, and to know how far they propose to carry their concessions;" and he named to me four members of Congress, to whom he thought of confiding his plan before putting it in execution, and who are all persons of approved character.

The delegate himself enjoys an excellent reputation, and it is exceedingly repugnant to me to suspect that he wished to involve me in a correspondence with the enemy; but he has so often spoken to me of

* "En ajoutant" should be translated "in adding." What follows, "that he fears his brother's attachment to independence," is not meant for Luzerne, but as the reason to be assigned to Clinton in New York for not negotiating through Daniel. It would be absurd to suppose that General Sullivan was proposing to the French minister what would shock his brother's sense of what was proper and honorable. It is not probable that the idea of any such communication with Clinton was ever seriously entertained.

the losses which he has met with by the Revolution, he regrets so bitterly his former competency, that I have feared for him the temptation to which he wished to expose himself, and I have not hesitated to divert him from the plan by showing him plainly the great inconveniences that it would entail. He has not formally promised me to renounce it; but if, in spite of the views that I intend again to present to him, he should persist, I will watch his course so closely that I shall hope to discover all that is good in it. As to the rest, I have always found him disposed to be very confiding, and it is to him that I always attribute the rupture of the league formed by the Eastern States; a league which, by false ideas of popularity, of liberty, and by an excessive jealousy of the Army and of the General-in-Chief, has for so long a time delayed the most urgent measures, and which on numerous occasions has shown itself equally jealous of our advantages and of our influence. He enjoys much consideration in his State, and had the credit of determining it to declare for Independence in 1776. This is the only State which has not yet fixed upon its form of Government; and as this delay has great inconveniences, and leaves to the badly intentioned the hope of seeing the re-establishment of the English Government, he has promised upon his return to use all his credit with the people to induce them to give themselves a constitution.

I do not know how much time he has yet to remain in Congress, but I thought you would not disapprove my making him the same offer that I made him last year, as long as he remains a delegate; and my proposition has been very well received.* At all events, it is desirable to treat him with consideration. It is much to be regretted that several other delegates find themselves in a still more necessitous condition. Those from the South, where the States are invaded, have no other resource than to receive from Congress an allowance for their subsistence, and this allowance is so limited that one of the delegates, who was formerly Governor of Georgia, is obliged to withdraw his wife from society for want of attire in which she could suitably appear.

This attempt of the English has given me the opportunity of asking

* The loan was made in the autumn of 1780. As he served but one year, the occasion did not arrive for the second one being made. The amount was so nearly identical with what he was to receive from his State that this, there seems reason to presume, fixed the amount. New Hampshire had no regular government or taxes. Money was probably contributed by those best off for public purposes. The entry on his account, in which he states the receipt of \$202, has no date attached to it, and may not have been before his return home in September, 1781.

the delegate to whom they have applied if the long acquaintance he has had with Congress, and the manner of voting among his colleagues, has led him to suspect any of them of corruption. He pointed out to me one against whom I had some old suspicions, and another whose character appeared to him equally doubtful; but with perhaps these two exceptions he felt sure that the Congress was composed of persons of trustworthy character and inaccessible to corruption.

I transmit, my Lord, the translation of a pamphlet against Mr. Duane, member of Congress for New York, published the very day that this delegate left Philadelphia to go to his own State. It has been inserted in a Gazette whose Editor has announced that he valued contributors according to the license with which they had written, and that torture alone, or the formality of the law, should draw from him the names of those who should use his journal to publish their productions. The article now in question is said to be by Gouverneur Morris, who sat in this assembly till the end of 1779 as delegate from this same State. The alleged facts are acknowledged to be true, but I think that Mr. Duane has long since abandoned the equivocal principles which guided him during the first years of the Revolution, and I have found him always attached to Independence.

I shall await your orders, my Lord, to enter the advances spoken of in this despatch upon my account of extraordinary expenses. Mr. Paine, of whom I have had the honor to speak to you before, and to whom I have thought all might look to write the history of the present Revolution, left for France last February, in the frigate "Alliance."

The two vessels sent from Cadiz with clothing for the American army have arrived safely in Boston.

I am, &c., &c.,

Signed,

THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE.

The delegate of whom I spoke at the beginning of this despatch, my Lord, is General Sullivan, who represents in Congress the State of New Hampshire.

That he should have stood in need of pecuniary assistance, in 1780, in Philadelphia was no discredit to him. He had expended all his available means in the service of the country; that country owed him five thousand dollars, of which he had reason to expect payment of a part certainly at an early day.

The army was ten months in arrear ; currency seventy to one in silver. The resources of the country were exhausted ; Washington writes, there was not money enough in the treasury to pay for an express : and that he should have been in a straitened condition, and at a loss to procure food and raiment, was his misfortune and not his fault. The whole tenor of his conduct in private and public relations was upright and honorable, and his life may safely challenge the most searching scrutiny for any transaction to justify the character which the historian would attach to this loan.

After the arduous campaign of 1777, of Brandywine and Germantown, when the army settled down at Valley Forge, General Sullivan requested a furlough in January, 1778, for the reason that his means were exhausted, his raiment in rags, and he wished to go home to replenish them. Washington felt compelled to withhold his consent, as there were not general officers enough in camp for the ordinary routine of duty. Later, when this objection was removed, he renewed his application, stating his needs, and that his pay for a month, such was the depreciation, was not sufficient for the expenses of a day. His second appeal was favorably received, and in March he was appointed to command the military department of Rhode Island at Providence.

Marbois, in his " Treason of Arnold," has given us the reply of Luzerne to that General, when he sought help to pay his debts, urging as an inducement the service he could render in return to the French government. These sentiments are in character with what is known of Luzerne and with those of his letter to Vergennes. There is not a single expression to intimate a wish or intent to corrupt. It is difficult indeed to conceive of any assignable motive for the French government or its ministers to desire to corrupt the Congress. France and America were one in the war. They had no separate objects or conflicting interests. Louis XVI. had expressly that very year disclaimed any wish to recover Canada, unless for the Americans. In a contest of which the strength essentially consisted in character and moral force, it would have been

suicidal to weaken public confidence by exposing to suspicion those who possessed it. France was at this time not only fighting our battles, sending us arms and raiment, lending and giving us money, and guaranteeing our loans, but actually paying from her treasury our ministers abroad. But this loan to Sullivan was not from France, but from the minister at his own motion and from his own private purse who did not mention it to Vergennes till six months afterwards, May 13, 1781, and then asks permission under the circumstances to charge it on account of his extraordinary expenses. When Sullivan accepted the loan, he had reason to expect to be able soon to repay it, but the poverty of the treasury prevented his obtaining what was due to him, and Luzerne had perhaps become, with reason, doubtful of repayment. In the absence of any proof to the contrary, there seems every reason to presume that Sullivan duly paid back what was thus kindly advanced. He received it as a loan, and there is no evidence he accepted it as a gift, or so considered it, certainly none as a bribe ; and the assertion that he was in the pay of Luzerne, and that it influenced his vote, is a wholly gratuitous aspersion on his integrity, a violence to language and violation of truth. His pay as Major-general, Attorney-general, President of the State, federal judge, was small. His depreciation, about five thousand dollars, was allowed him in 1787 ; his lands and mills became valuable after the peace : but his expenses were large, his hospitalities bountiful, and when he died he left the estate at Durham, but little else, to his family. But this does not prove he did not repay the sixty-eight guineas to Luzerne.

The allusion to better days, in contrast with his then straitened condition not understood by Luzerne, seems susceptible of easy explanation. It does not necessarily imply that General Sullivan repined at sacrifices he doubtless cheerfully accepted with his countrymen as the price of liberty. He may have been simply paying an indirect compliment to the minister whose hospitality and festal entertainments were the one cheering incident in the social life of Philadelphia at that gloomy period ; or possibly apologizing for attire not up to the occasion

or in character with the splendors that surrounded him ; or, what is yet more natural, for the reduced condition which compelled him to accept a pecuniary favor by this loan thus kindly proffered. He was frank and outspoken, and what he said was not intended for history ; and there is no reason to believe that any candid mind will give it an ungenerous or unwarranted construction.

Luzerne expresses a doubt if the response sent by his brother Daniel to Clinton was as proud and offensive as described. But a few months before, Arnold had sold himself to the English for thirty thousand pounds and other like considerations ; and the sentiment among the Americans towards him would have naturally created a lively sense of indignation in any honorable mind at this attempt to tamper. Daniel Sullivan, after being engaged in the siege of Castine, was taken, in February, 1780, from his bed at Sullivan in Maine, by Mowatt, who burnt Falmouth in 1775. In an English frigate entering Frenchman's Bay, he burnt Daniel's house, the family being driven out into the snow, took him to Castine, endeavored to induce him to swear allegiance to the king, and upon his refusal carried him to New York, where he was imprisoned in the Jersey hulks, and, when released a few months after this visit to Philadelphia, he died, it is said of poison, on the Sound on his way home.

The response Gen. Sullivan made to Clinton's proposition, the disposition of the letter, his selection of his confidant, all proved his good sense, right feeling, and integrity of character. That no evidence exists in the letter of Luzerne that he communicated this attempt to corrupt him to his associates in Congress, is no proof that no such communication was made. It probably was made to his more intimate friends. The proposition to draw Clinton into a correspondence, with the knowledge of four of the most trusty and respected members of Congress, was thrown out in the freedom of friendly intercourse, without fear of misapprehension, and was probably not very seriously contemplated for a moment, and dismissed without a second thought. It should serve as a caution to public characters to

weigh their words in conversation with foreign ministers, whose correspondence home, after slumbering for ages in its appropriate sepulchres, may be exhumed by historians to work prejudice not deserved. The letter of Luzerne, so far from proving that Sullivan was in his pay by borrowing from him three hundred dollars, which he offered of his own accord, is honorable to Sullivan throughout. We do not claim any credit for him for not yielding to Clinton's attempt to corrupt him. Though penniless, with some reason to feel he had been unkindly dealt with by Congress, though the cause was well-nigh lost by exhaustion and discouragement, and he may well have anticipated confiscation and possibly death as the consequence of its failure, it was no temptation to him, and he certainly was not likely to sell his integrity to Luzerne for a few hundred dollars, if it had not been a gratuitous insult to the memory of that minister to suppose him capable of any participation in any such transaction.

In history as in morals, suppression of the truth is near akin to suggestion of what is not. If descendants or kindred of historical personages have no rights historians are bound to respect, readers of history certainly have a claim not to be misled; and historical societies are bound to further the cause of the truth in historical relations. It signifies little what view any one author may entertain of the public services of the dead, who cannot vindicate their fame when unjustly aspersed; but, where his position enables him to convey erroneous impressions, societies and individuals should listen without impatience and without favor, with entire impartiality, till both sides have been heard.

In some other passages of the lately published volume, occasion is taken to present views not borne out by the evidence with regard to General Sullivan. It is stated that in the Rhode Island campaign in 1778, Sullivan for a whim detained for ten days the French fleet in the offing. In his first letter to D'Estaing, upon his arrival, — the copy is not dated, — he states his reasons for wishing the larger part of the fleet to block up the middle channel between Rhode Island and Conan-

icut, were to prevent re-enforcements from New York, to keep out the British fleet, to co-operate with the force that was to pass up the West Channel to turn Conanicut and prevent three British regiments on that island from passing over to Newport. This was not a whim, but good sense, and the historian had access to this letter which explained them. Even in this Sullivan did not dictate, but left it to D'Estaing's own judgment to determine what was best.

The admiral, in his letters, assigns three other reasons for remaining where he was until the arrival of the American re-enforcements should justify an attack. His fleet, farther up the channel, would be exposed to the fire of the batteries, which could inflict more damage upon his vessels than he could upon them. In the anticipation of a possible attack from Howe and Byron, it was important to keep control of his fleet, which, as the south wind generally prevails at Newport in summer, he would lose higher up, and his laying off Beaver-Tail, blockading the middle channel, would prevent the garri-son escaping. This last consideration loses force as the event fell short of expectation; but if an attack could have been made by the combined forces of D'Estaing and Sullivan the place must have surrendered.

All the arrangements for landing on the island were based upon the British retaining Butt's Hill, about one hundred and eighty feet high, strongly fortified at the north end of the island commanding the passage from Tiverton, the best place to cross. As soon as they abandoned it, Sullivan crossed over, and took possession early on the morning of the 9th of August. D'Estaing had written him two days before that he proposed to land when he had an opportunity without waiting for him. Any one who knows the island must realize that if with such a force any crossing was to be effected, the opportunity to do so unopposed was not to be hazarded by delay. It is inconceivable that Sullivan should not have sought to communicate the fact of his crossing the earliest possible moment to D'Estaing. He did so. Lafayette went to the fleet that morning, whilst one part of the army intended to co-operate with D'Estaing remained still at Tiverton.

That day the fleet of Howe hove in sight, and on the next morning D'Estaing bore down upon it; but the English admiral drew him off the coast, probably to open the gate for re-enforcements to Newport. When on the 20th his fleet returned in a shattered condition, Greene and Lafayette, going on board, endeavored in vain to persuade him to remain. The moment hope could no longer be reasonably entertained of co-operation, orders were given by General Sullivan to fortify Butt's Hill and Howland's ferry, and that other measures should be taken for withdrawing from the island. The volunteers had become restless, and many of them had already left. It was necessary to proceed with caution; for, in the event of a panic, the safety of the army would have been endangered. If numerically stronger, — Sullivan had less than eight thousand men; the garrison of Newport consisted of about seven thousand, for the most part veterans well officered and organized; a large proportion of the American troops had been hastily levied since the middle of July, untrained, poorly armed, only fifteen hundred having ever been in action.

While taking every step to ensure a safe and speedy retreat, a bold front was presented to the enemy; and the general orders of the twenty-fourth, after impressing upon his army the importance of not allowing the departure of the French fleet to discourage them, expressed a hope that they might be able to procure by their own arms what their allies refused their assistance in obtaining. On the twenty-sixth, while disclaiming any intention of giving offence to their allies, he expressed the wish that they might speedily return to carry out the enterprise. Certainly, under no other compulsion than his own good sense and consideration for others he cheerfully endeavored to remove on this occasion, as on many another in his life, sensitiveness from expressions he had felt bound to use under the existing conditions, and which had wounded undue susceptibility. Our own army and the country had cause to feel not only disappointed but provoked at the posture of affairs. Had D'Estaing on his return consented to stay forty-eight hours, Newport would have been taken.

In the army were many of the most influential men of New England, of its best and bravest, who had left their work and their employments with confidence of success from the encouragement held out by France. They had made extraordinary efforts and been at great cost. To keep them in good heart and willing to remain till they could withdraw in safety from the island was the main consideration, and this was best to be accomplished by giving expression to their prevailing sentiment. Whoever scans without prejudice either of the general orders, of the 24th or 26th, must admit that they were eminently calculated to produce the state of feeling the occasion demanded, of reliance upon themselves in the first moment of abandonment, of due acknowledgment to France for services rendered to the cause as well as confidence in her continued co-operation. General Sullivan's own letter to D'Estaing contained no word of irritation, and the protest that followed was an exact statement of the case, and the French officers, in taking umbrage at its freedom, were unduly sensitive. If they had acted upon its sensible conclusions, instead of losing temper, Newport would have fallen, and the war possibly have come to an end. Sullivan had but little time in the pressure of events to cull words or phrases, but only the maligner can find in what is left of his correspondence of those busy weeks any thing to criticise or censure.

Sullivan is criticised for fortifying Honeyman's Hill with a redoubt. All may not be familiar with the ground; but the hill one hundred and eighty feet in elevation, and the highest point at the southerly part of the island, was just two miles from the extreme left of the British outer line beyond Miantonomi Hill, and a like distance from the extreme right of its inner line at Easton Beach. The salient point of the British outer line at Bliss Hill was within half a mile of Honeyman's, and the fire of the American works compelled Pigot to draw farther back. Honeyman's Hill could not be turned; and, in case of re-enforcements to the garrison and any disaster compelling withdrawal from the island, it would have formed a rallying point. It communicated by a straight road running north to

the east road, the direct line to Butt's Hill, and also with the east passage, in case it were found worth while to cross lower down, boats at Tiverton being near enough to be available for that purpose anywhere along the shore.

The historian is of course wiser than Gridley or Gouvion, two of the most distinguished engineers of the war, when he complains that batteries were raised too remote to be of use. The most distant was half a mile from the outer lines of the enemy, and Pigot admits that their fire compelled him to withdraw his troops. It must be remembered that it was the 23d of August before all hope of co-operation was relinquished, indeed not altogether then, and it was not prudent to acquaint the enemy by discontinuing the approaches that the siege was given up. Of the five general officers consulted on that day nearly all counselled an attack on the enemy's lines if opportunity offered. But Sullivan, whilst prepared for such an event, sent over his heavy guns and stores, and fortified Howland's and Bristol ferry. It was on the 28th that the departure of three thousand of the militia and volunteers whose terms of enlistment were expired reduced his strength so that the expectation of any such chance occurring was given up, and that day the Americans, without precipitation, removed to Butt's Hill at the north end of the island.

If the author had known much of what was usual among gentlemen and generals at that period, he would have realized that General Washington was too much of both to send incessant messages to quit the island. Sullivan commanded a separate department, responsible to Congress and the Board of War as well as to the Commander-in-chief, and all of them while giving information and advice would naturally have left the decision of what was most prudent to the officer in command. Letters were two or three days on the road between White Plains and Newport.

Washington wrote on the 23d to inform Sullivan that one hundred and fifty vessels were collected near Frog's Point, and possibly destined for Newport, and that he must be upon his guard; that he does not doubt that every precaution will be

taken to secure the passage across to the main on any emergency ; at the same time he is persuaded that he will not suffer any ill-founded or premature alarm to produce any change in his dispositions which may impair or frustrate the enterprise. On the 29th he says that the day before he had written to say that a number of transports were in the sound, and were then at Oyster Bay, detained by the wind ; that a large body of troops had been embarked upon them from Long Island, and it was rumored that they numbered five thousand men, and Sir Henry Clinton was with them. Sullivan was already making all due despatch in order to leave the island without sacrifice of his valuable stores of provisions, arms, and munitions of war, which had been collected there. He was daily apprised of all that it concerned him to know. When the letter of the 29th reached him he had already quitted the island, and the uncourteous language indulged by the historian conveys a censure altogether undeserved. The admirable letter of General Greene to John Brown bears witness to the prudence, sagacity, and energy of General Sullivan throughout the campaign, and Congress confirmed the justice of his conclusions by their vote of thanks.

Sullivan is said to have been unduly importunate for supplies for the Indian expedition of 1779. His force when Clinton was ready, and he could not start before, left Wyoming twenty-one hundred strong on the 31st of July, and Clinton joined them at Tioga on the 22d of August. Their united forces, about thirty-six hundred, discovered on the 29th the Indians with their British allies in a well-fortified position at Newtown. They were less actually in number than there was reason to believe. The fort was on the declivity of a hill with the water in front and forming a bend around it. To have made an assault from the space between the water and the hill would have exposed the army to disadvantage ; and the object was, if possible, to capture the enemy with little loss. He despatched a force under Clinton and Poor to attack them in the rear from the hills above and surround them ; but its progress was obstinately disputed, and the enemy, better acquainted with the ground, effected their escape.

Washington, on the 15th January, 1779, wrote Sullivan that as no reasonable expectation could be entertained of collecting sufficient forces for an attack to advantage on New York or Rhode Island, and the invasion of Canada was too hazardous and expensive, he advised that the efficiency of the army should be increased by discipline and organization rather than by numbers and that by improving the condition of officers and soldiers the service should be rendered popular. In this Sullivan was disposed of course to aid, and, in the opinion of a good judge in military matters, the instructions given by General Sullivan to his officers, the order of march he prescribed to his troops, and the discipline he had the ability to maintain, would have done honor to the most experienced general.

He maintained good discipline in his camp, and firing the morning gun as customary, when omitted, would have been sufficient blind to their position. It would have been folly to have expected to keep the movements of so numerous a force concealed from the Indians, in the wilderness with so large a part of which they were familiar; whilst for the Americans to leave their lines was to expose them to the fate of Captain Boyd, and it was consequently judicious to conform to the ordinary ceremonial of camp life. Their instructions were to destroy the crops and villages, but so late in the season that the Indians should not replant or rebuild; to prevent their inroads on our settlements by retaliation, and by depriving them of means of annoyance: and this was effected, but, long before the appointed task was completed, the army was put on short allowance from insufficient supplies. General Sullivan's request to the army to submit patiently to half rations, which had become from the quantity remaining unavoidable, stated that every effort had been made, but from inattention to his entreaties enough had not been provided. This gave offence to the Board of War; but, long before the campaign was over or its objects effected, they were from this cause in danger of being defeated. Congress took no notice of these expressions of discontent, but passed the usual vote of thanks to the army for what it had accomplished.

Our present design is not a biography. Materials exist not yet in print to warrant such a work. It would shed light that is needed upon the great historical epoch that cradled our national life and shaped the Republic. But whilst our institutions are considered worthy of preservation, interest in that epoch will little abate. Other generations will demand new publications, value what remains to be told of its characters and incidents. Prejudice and misconception will have at last run their course, and juster estimates be made. Should these materials be thus improved by some one competent for the task, the services Sullivan rendered to the cause of independence will be better appreciated. His path of duty was beset with many embarrassments. He had to contend with his full share of ill-natured opposition and ungenerous rivalry. It was a fiery furnace to try whatever there was of good in him, but among the most precious legacies our revolutionary era has left us are the lessons it affords for the study of character.

Standards differ as to what is meritorious. But there are central points common to all. It is not for his near of kin to praise him, but some latitude must be allowed even to them when appealing to the country from what they conceive a systematic attempt to defame by statements they can prove to be untrue and inferences which are wholly unsustained. No human character is free from blemish. But his ardent desire not only to deserve but secure the favorable judgment of other men never swerved him from what he conceived his duty demanded. His quickness of temper under injury and insult, impatience of what he conceived open to censure, his frankness in expressing his mind, became chastened, and he profited by experience. His readiness to make reparation when he had given unwilling or unintentional offence, his general amiability and kindness of nature, his warm sympathy with other men's troubles and generous contributions to their needs to the extent of his means and opportunity, should cover a multitude of faults, if any he had. His character in some points was strongly contrasted to that of Greene, one of the noblest of the war. Greene was of a calmer mould, of a quieter temperament.

But they were both loyal, upright, self-sacrificing, generous, attached to each other as they were to Washington and Washington to them; and as the friend of Washington and Greene, whose esteem he never forfeited or lost, the memory of Sullivan will remain unscathed, even under the fiery darts of the historian.

Our struggle for liberty and independence was not by any means a series of brilliant victories. It consisted, on the contrary, of constant defeats, but brave and prolonged resistance to enemies more numerous, better armed and supplied with every appliance of war, whilst our troops were often without shoes to their feet, was more heroic, redounded more to the glory of the combatants than success. There were other trials besides physical suffering. Hope deferred imbittered the public mind, and whoever occupied positions of responsibility was held to rigorous account for not succeeding where success was impossible, and it was quite unreasonable to expect it. This disposition to hold him accountable for events which he could not control had its advantages. He was not disposed to parade his services, but when subjected to criticism he was often compelled in self-defence to state what had actually taken place, and details that otherwise would have been lost have been preserved. What he stated to Congress or other public bodies or in the press was with the knowledge of crowds of witnesses who had taken part in the events described. The accuracy of his statements would have been questioned if not corresponding with their own impressions. Every particle of information connected with the war has its interest, and these details are of value. Possibly the readiness to censure may have chilled the spirit of enterprise, and induced circumspection; but in our Fabian policy, which was our safety, and which our inferior means and numbers rendered imperative, it may also have prevented waste of resources not easily replaced.

As this vindication may be read by many unacquainted with the biographies of General Sullivan, some passages from them are presented to indicate what he appeared to his contemporaries or to the generation that immediately followed. They are for the most part selected from Peabody's Memoir:—

“General Sullivan was an eloquent lawyer, a good writer, and, as a man, just and sagacious. He was generous, high-spirited, and intrepid; and, in his bearing, graceful and dignified. He conversed freely and with fluency; and his engaging address made the stranger at once at ease in his presence. He had the faculty — invaluable to an advocate — of making each one in a company of many persons think he was an object of his particular attention. He was hospitable, fond of the elegancies of life, prodigal of money; but in his dealings honest, generous, and honorable. His temper was ordinarily mild and tranquil, and as far removed from petulance as any man could be, but when irritated it was fierce and violent. It was however transient, leaving behind it no feeling of bitterness; a single conciliatory word would readily disarm his anger. He was not without fondness for display, and at all times exercised a liberal hospitality. In his dealings he was scrupulously careful of the feelings as well as the rights of others; always generous, and more careless of his own interest than his friends could have desired.

“His talents must have been of no ordinary kind. Without many advantages of early instruction, he rose, at an early period of life, to high distinction at the bar, and in a few years entered the military service. Little time could have been spared from these engagements to devote to subjects unconnected with his principal pursuits; but he appears to have been familiar with political science; and his letters, the only productions of his pen which survive, are written in a clear, vigorous, and manly style.

“He took a lively interest in military preparations for defence, and his writings on that subject are sensible and comprehensive. His religious sentiments were deep, though he shrank from display; and a manuscript defence of Christianity — written in camp and circulated amongst his brother-officers — is alluded to in a subsequent notice of him, though not known to have been preserved.”

Should it be thought that too much importance has been attached to this charge, it must be remembered that the expressions used in their natural import convey an imputation of dishonor which has no greater or less, for which had it been true there is no extenuation. Influence exerted or votes cast in legislative bodies from unworthy motives are not to be defended, cannot be palliated. The charge not only was calculated

to create prejudice from its vagueness, but from the evidence being in a foreign language, in a confidential letter of great length, occupied with other topics. It was necessary to secure a faithful rendering of the original letter which could not be questioned, and then that its contents should be passed upon by the leading historical societies of the country, better able to pass judgment upon such questions from their familiarity with the period, its events and personages, than the generality of readers. The letter of Luzerne and its translation, with the comments upon it herein contained, as well as the correction of numberless other mistakes of the historian, have been laid before the historical societies of Rhode Island, those of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, and is respectfully commended to the attention of other similar societies in America, to consider whether the acceptance of a loan of three hundred dollars, when penniless, in Philadelphia, from M. Luzerne, justifies the language used by the historian; whether that language was not obviously designed to convey an impression wholly unsupported by the evidence which, when the descendants of General Sullivan besought and demanded the proof of this cruel charge, was forthcoming. Those descendants may well ask the American public to credit to the unreasoning and unscrupulous prejudice, to use no harsher term, which has inspired this accusation, the unjust and uncourteous criticisms on his military services. There is not a statement of any importance in this last volume or its predecessor relating to him which is not wholly untrue or grossly inexact.

Honorable and candid minds not blinded by the reputation of a successful writer to the claims of truth will, we are confident, after examination of the evidence, come to the conclusion that he was not a pensioner of Luzerne; that he did not for a whim keep D'Estaing ten days in the offing at Newport; that he sent timely notice to that officer of his crossing on to the island; that what Greene, Glover, Cornell, Varnum, were willing to sign could not have been more than the occasion demanded; and that he did not disregard Washington's order to leave the island, as he did not receive any, but of his own

judgment, lost no time in withdrawing the moment it was prudent and sensible that he should.

This claim upon the attention of the American public can require no apology. The character of our statesmen and general officers, prominently engaged in our revolutionary struggle, concerns us all. The success of that struggle against formidable odds and various discouragements is to be attributed, in part, to the virtue and patriotism of the whole people, but also, in a great measure, to the high honor and unimpeachable integrity of their leaders in counsel and field. The confidence which they inspired gave strength at home, and conciliated support from abroad. When, as in this instance, charges are brought which tarnish their good name, it behooves the public generally, and especially historical societies composed of historical students familiar with the subject, to investigate their truth. It is important that the vindication should be preserved in the transactions; they are of a permanent nature, and will be accessible in all future times to historical writers. If evidence is wanting of any fact stated to show these charges groundless, it is at hand.

APPENDIX.

IN one of the comments of the "Philadelphia Press" on the paper read by President Wallace, of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, on the letter of Luzerne, are to be found certain arguments conclusive to show that not only the statements of the historian are not sustained by the evidence offered, but could not possibly be true: they are not embraced in the paper read itself, or, if suggested, not directly and fully presented. The article says that the document produced by the historian fails to show that Sullivan's vote on the fisheries was in any way influenced by the loan, and for the following reasons:—

"1. Luzerne says that the delegate 'enjoys an excellent reputation,' and that it is 'exceedingly repugnant to me to suspect that he wished to involve me in a correspondence with the enemy.' But to what purpose is such a remark if Luzerne was at the moment conscious that he had himself been guilty of bribing a member of Congress, and had just bought the man in question for the paltry sum of sixty-eight guineas?

"2. Luzerne, it must be remembered, was writing with an object, an interest. He had made, a long time before ('last year'), an advance ('avance' is the French original) of the public money of France to Sullivan. He made no mention of it at the time to Vergennes. The object of his letter now is to get himself credited in account with it. Had he told Vergennes simply that he had made a *loan* to Sullivan, he would have destroyed the object which he had in view. The answer would have been, 'Get it back from Sullivan.' Could he have said that the interests of France made it expedient to bribe a certain

person, and that he had bribed him, his case would have been clear. But he does not say this. It looks as if the State of New Hampshire being tardy, Luzerne had made to Sullivan an 'advance' of his congressional pay, on private account, and expecting certainly that the State would soon put Sullivan in funds to repay it; that the State not doing this immediately, or soon, Luzerne considered the loan in danger, and now profits by the revelation which Sullivan had made to him about British tentatives at bribery to inform Vergennes that it was desirable to keep well with Sullivan, and so now lays claim to be refunded out of the public purse what he had advanced long before on an account purely private, and with an expectation of being certainly and soon repaid. That Luzerne was repaid by *France* is not shown.

"3. When Luzerne says that he advanced to Sullivan sixty-eight guineas, 'under the appearance of a loan,' he implies that he offered to lend the money, and that Sullivan took it promising to repay; and he implies that not a word was said about bribe or gift. For had one such word been spoken, 'the appearance of a loan' could not have existed. The appearance would have disappeared. Now, if Luzerne offered to lend the money, and if Sullivan took it promising to repay it, and if not a word more was said on either side, Mr. Bancroft's round and positive charge is unjustified, and if unjustified is defamatory. That which at the time of making it was both made and received as a loan may be called in one sense, and when the lender thinks he will never again see his money, an 'advance' or even a gift 'under the appearance of a loan;' especially when by being called either the lender can make himself whole again out of the public purse.

"4. Had the money been given as a bribe, no mention of names would have been made as made in Luzerne's letter. Bribes are charged to the secret service fund; a fund for the disposition of which no minister is expected to account, and where the name of the recipient would certainly not have been mentioned, the times and the agent having been the times and the agent of Louis XVI.; the recipient being a major-general in the army of an ally, and a member of the Congress of a friendly nation.

"When Luzerne says that he gave Sullivan sixty-eight guineas *sous l'apparence d'un prêt*, we understand him to mean, that, though Sullivan was in great pecuniary necessity, he, Luzerne, could not undertake to offer him money as a gift; that Sullivan would have resented this, and therefore that he had offered to *lend* Sullivan money,

which money, *as a loan*, Sullivan had accepted; though it is rather plainly implied that Luzerne, who was writing six months after the loan was made, did not *then* ever expect to see his money again. But this don't prove that Sullivan betrayed his State for that money.

"As for all the conversation and fears about Sullivan's going over to the British, it is not of any weight. The whole letter, after all, is but a report by a diplomat to his superior, of a conversation had six months before with a man who spoke a language not common to the two parties. The conversation bears conclusive marks of having come through the alëmbic of a vivacious Frenchman's memory, not to say, perhaps, in some degree of his imagination. For, though the conversation was one six months old, Luzerne does not profess to give its substance, but all its very words in quoted form. It was wholly impossible for him to have done this, even supposing that he perfectly understood all that six months before Sullivan meant to say to him. Sullivan never saw the letter. He might have denied three-fourths or the whole of it. The country did not support the historian in his remarks about Greene and Schuyler. Neither will it, we think, in his charge that Sullivan betrayed New Hampshire for a few pieces of coin."

GENERAL JOHN SULLIVAN.

At the annual meeting of the New Hampshire Historical Society, held in Concord on the ninth day of June, 1875, the committee appointed to inquire into the justice of certain allegations contained in the tenth volume of Bancroft's History of the United States concerning Major-General John Sullivan of New Hampshire, submitted the following report, which, being read, was accepted and adopted by the society.

REPORT.

The allegations of Mr. Bancroft are found in the tenth volume of his history, on page 452, where he says, "With the aid of Sullivan of New Hampshire, who was in the pay of France, instructions such as Vergennes might have drafted were first agreed upon;" and on page 502, where these words are used: "That New Hampshire abandoned the claim to the fisheries was due to Sullivan, who at the time was a pensioner of Luzerne."

This language imports nothing less than that General Sullivan, then a delegate from New Hampshire in the Continental Congress, betrayed the interests of his State and country for a bribe from the agents of France. It is an accusation of the gravest character, brought now for the first time against a revolutionary patriot of conspicuous position and hitherto unsuspected purity, and in a work assuming to be of the highest authority. Every one of these considerations demands that, to justify such an arraignment, nothing less than complete, unimpeachable proof of its truth should be forthcoming.

Mr. Bancroft, upon the request of the descendants of General Sullivan, has produced the evidence on which he bases his assertion. It is a despatch from the Chevalier de la Luzerne, the French ambassador at Philadelphia, to the Count de Vergennes, the minister of Foreign Affairs of the King of France, and its meaning will be considered in another part of this report.

But it is proper first to remark that the charge of Mr. Bancroft derives no credibility from the action of General Sullivan in Congress, on the occasion alluded to in the two passages cited.

The question, what terms should be insisted on by this country in making peace with Great Britain, was repeatedly before Congress, and received various decisions. But long before General Sullivan, after his military service, was returned as a delegate, it had been determined that the only *indispensable* condition was the recognition of our national independence. At the same time no American envoys, intrusted with the responsible duty of negotiating a treaty, could have been insensible to the importance of the questions of boundaries, the common right of fishery, and the navigation of the Mississippi, in which the various sections of our country were so vitally interested.

As early as the beginning of 1781, France was weary of the war. She had engaged to make no peace with Great Britain without the independence of America being secured, but she had not pledged herself to continue the contest for the purpose of gaining further advantages to her ally. She naturally wished that the instructions of Congress to our commissioners for negotiating a peace should contain no ultimatum except the recognition of our independence. Her ministers declared this to Congress in plain language, and there was no disposition among the most of the delegates to gainsay her wishes. The suspicions of the motives of France which prevailed afterwards among our commissioners abroad had not yet arisen here ; the country was animated by feelings of gratitude to our allies, and Congress reflected the sentiments of the country. It is easy,

therefore, to account for the influence which the French minister exerted on that body, without resorting to the revolting suspicion of bribery.

On the subjects of the fisheries, and of the instructions to our commissioners, a great majority of the delegates voted with Sullivan, — only three or four of the States dissenting. The vote of New Hampshire was not given by Sullivan alone; he only shared the responsibility with his sole colleague, Mr. Livermore, a gentleman whose integrity, ability, and independence forbid the belief that he could have been influenced by Sullivan, wittingly or unwittingly, to be false to his trust.

The reason which the majority assigned for their action was, that other restrictions upon our commissioners might have been fatal to the accomplishment of peace; that the disposition of France was favorable to us; and that the interests of our country being committed to John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, and Henry Laurens, among the ablest of our patriots, familiar with the wants and hopes of the country, every attainable advantage would be secured. And the issue of the negotiations bore out their views. The commissioners did obtain for us all that had been claimed in our days of greatest confidence.

The fact, then, that General Sullivan acted with the majority in Congress in reference to the conditions of peace, affords no possible ground for the imputation that he was improperly influenced by agents of France.

This leaves the charge of Mr. Bancroft to rest upon the authority of Luzerne's despatch alone. The following is a translation of that paper into English, only a few paragraphs relating to other subjects being omitted.*

* Since this report was presented, a circular has been issued in the name of the publishers of Mr. Bancroft, and presumably sanctioned by himself, in which the despatch of Luzerne is given, differing slightly (by reason of clerical errors, as we are informed) from the version before published. In printing the report, Mr. Bancroft's translation has been followed, as perhaps sufficiently correct for the present purpose, although it is not thought to convey the exact sense of the original in all particulars.

[The copy of the Luzerne letter made by a copyist employed by Major Appleton of the Patent Office at Washington, from which the text in the Massachusetts Historical

PHILADELPHIA, May 13, 1781.

MY LORD,—When the letter-mail from Philadelphia was intercepted last year, and the English printed some of the letters, I noticed one from a Delegate who complained of the pecuniary straits in which he was kept by his State, and the dearth of all the necessaries of life in Philadelphia. Of this I had the honor of sending you a translation. From that time it seemed necessary that I should open my purse for a Delegate whose needs were made known to the enemy by his own confession, and in the guise of a loan I sent him sixty-eight guineas and four-sevenths. The interception of a second mail put the English in possession of a letter addressed to him by the Treasurer of his State; and this also they printed. This, too, treated of pecuniary necessities. General Clinton suspected that a man so pressed for money could be easily corrupted, and as his brother was a prisoner in New York, he permitted the latter to go to Philadelphia on the pretext of negotiating his exchange. The Delegate sought me, and told me in confidence that his brother had brought him a letter, unsigned, but which he knew by the handwriting to have been written by an English colonel then in New York. "The writer of this letter," he said to me, "after dwelling on the resources of England, and the means which she possesses for ultimately subjugating America, compliments me warmly on my intelligence, my talents, and the high esteem in which the English hold me." He added, "that they regard me as the fittest man to negotiate a reconciliation between the mother country and the English colonies; that they wish me to make known my sentiments on this subject; that all overtures on my part will be received with the consideration which they deserve; that I have only to state my wishes; that the person who wrote to me was fully empowered to open a special negotiation with me, and that I may count upon the profoundest secrecy."

"I made answer to my brother with all the indignation that such propositions aroused in me; I threw the letter in the fire before his face, and when he started for New York I begged him to let those who

Society's Proceedings was printed, reads as follows: "J'ignore combien de temps il doit encore rester dans le Congrès, mais j'ai pensé que vous ne désapprouverez pas que je fisse l'offre de lui ai fait l'année dernière, aussi longtemps qu'il sera Délégué, et ma proposition a été très bien accueillie." In a copy printed by the publishers of the history the sentence reads, "J'ignore combien de tems il doit encore rester dans le Congrès, mais j'ai pensé que vous ne désapprouverez pas que je vous fisse l'offre de lui continuer, tous les six mois, le prêt que je lui ai fait l'année dernière, aussi longtemps qu'il sera Délégué, et ma proposition a été très bien accueillie."]

sent him understand that their overtures had been received with the deepest scorn. Yet I have preserved silence about this matter toward Congress, partly in order not to compromise my brother, partly in order not to make a parade of my own disinterestedness, and partly because I thought it hazardous to announce with too much positiveness to my colleagues that the enemy was seeking a traitor among us, and that his reward was ready. But I thought I ought to confide to you these particulars, in order to put you on your guard against the enemy's intrigues, even in the very bosom of Congress; for if they have dared to make such offers to me, whose attachment to the good cause is so generally known, it is only too possible that they have done the same to others who have not apprised you of it."

This confidential communication seemed to me to be true, in the main; but I was not quite convinced that this Delegate had charged his brother to carry to New York a message so haughty and so insulting to the English as that which he had repeated to me. He made me a very strange proposition,—to pretend to lend an ear to the overtures that had been made to him, and to send a trusty man to New York to ask of General Clinton a plan of reconciliation; adding that he had been unwilling to use his brother's services, fearing his attachment to the cause of independence. "I see," he told me, "many advantages in thus sounding the disposition of the English, in order to find out what their scheme of corruption may be, and to learn how far they intend to go in their concessions,"—and he named to me four members of Congress to whom he proposed to confide his project before putting it into execution,—all of them being men of established integrity. This Delegate himself enjoys an excellent reputation, and I am very unwilling to suspect that he meant to make me a cloak for a correspondence with the enemy; but he has so often told me of the losses that the Revolution has occasioned him, and so bitterly regretted his former condition of ease and comfort, that I could not help dreading for him the temptation which he would encounter; and I did not hesitate to dissuade him from the enterprise, by clearly pointing out the great evils that it would entail. He did not promise me, formally, to abandon it; but if, notwithstanding the representations which I intend to reiterate to him, he persists in it, I shall so narrowly watch his conduct that I shall hope to discover whatever may be ambiguous in it. Moreover, I have constantly encouraged him to be very confiding; and to him I always attribute the rupture of the league formed by the Eastern States,—a league which, by false notions of popularity and of

liberty, and by excessive jealousy of the army and the general-in-chief, has long obstructed the most necessary measures, and which on many occasions has shown itself jealous at once of our interests and of our influence. In his own State he is highly esteemed; he enjoys the credit of determining it to declare for independence in 1776. It is the only State which has not yet fixed its form of government, and, since this delay has been productive of evil, and permits ill-disposed persons still to hope for the re-establishment of the English government, he has promised me that, on his return, he will use his influence with the people to induce them to adopt a constitution. I know not how much longer he will remain in Congress; but I thought you would not disapprove my offer to continue to him, every six months, the loan that I made him last year, so long as he shall remain a Delegate, and my proposition has been very gratefully received. In any event it is interesting to keep an eye on him. It is unfortunate that many other Delegates are in situations even still more necessitous. Some from the South, whose States are occupied by the enemy, have no other resources than the receipt of a bounty from Congress for their subsistence, and this bounty is so small that one of them, who was formerly governor of Georgia, is compelled to withdraw his wife from society, for the want of clothing in which she could respectably appear.

This attempt of the English gave me a chance to ask this Delegate whom they approached, if his long experience in Congress, and his colleagues' manner of voting, had led him to suspect any of them of corruption. He indicated the person against whom I had formerly cherished suspicions, and another whose character seemed to him equally suspicious; but with these two exceptions he thought that Congress was composed of gentlemen of steadfast character, and inaccessible to corrupt approaches.

I will await your orders, my Lord, to carry the advances spoken of in this despatch to my account of extraordinary expenses.

I am, &c., &c.,

(signed)

LE CH. DE LA LUZERNE.

The Delegate spoken of at the beginning of this despatch, my Lord, is General Sullivan, who represents the State of New Hampshire in Congress.

Plainly, the first thing to get at is the *purpose* of this multifarious communication. It could not be to announce that General Sullivan had been "pensioned" by the writer, or received into "the pay of France." If that had been the meaning, what need of so much irrelevant matter? Surely there was no occasion to beat about the bush in a private communication between the French envoy and his official chief. Luzerne had only to say, "For three hundred dollars I have bought, to do our bidding, a delegate in Congress, late a major-general in the army, and now a member of the principal committees," — and the brevity of the epistle would have needed no apology, in consideration of the satisfactory nature of its contents; that is, if it was any part of the policy of the French government to corrupt the leaders of their allies, which, both on account of the moral effect of the transaction if discovered or suspected, and because of its needlessness in the state of public feeling then subsisting, may well be doubted.

But it is clear that the despatch was not intended to convey that idea. Nowhere in it is there one word to indicate that General Sullivan had agreed, or was expected, to do more than his duty for France, or less than his duty for America.

In our opinion the despatch admits of one very simple and natural explanation, and of no other. Luzerne, generous in relieving the distresses of the American soldiery, had with like liberality opened his purse for the assistance of a distinguished delegate in Congress, whose needy condition was accidentally made public. Of course, he expected to be reimbursed in a reasonable time. But months had gone on, and such was the scarcity of money that General Sullivan was unable, either from his property at home, from the continental treasury which was considerably indebted to him, or from his State, which was entirely in arrear with his salary, to obtain the means to repay the advance. Luzerne had reason to believe that France would scruple to assume no reasonable expenditures made for the benefit of the United States, if only the occasion was of sufficient consequence to warrant them. His despatch was

obviously written, therefore, to induce the French government to allow him to charge to the public account the money which he had lent to General Sullivan, not because it had been applied for purposes of corruption, but simply because he feared that otherwise he should be compelled to lose it from his own pocket.

Hence the burden of his letter is, that Sullivan, in his known destitute condition, was in danger of being suborned by the British. To heighten the effect of the suggestion, he introduces the statement from Sullivan of approaches which had already been made him from an English officer in New York, which statement, by the way, heard through the medium of a foreign tongue, and reproduced in the French manner, will hardly be taken as literally exact. The acute Frenchman would readily discern that his claim to be reimbursed from the treasury of his king would be all the more plausible, if an expectation of that kind had been entertained from the start. This would account for the adroit manner in which he describes his advance to Sullivan as made "in the guise of a loan," and mentions that he had made to him "the offer to continue every six months the loan that he made him last year, so long as he should remain a delegate, which proposition was very gratefully received." All this was excellently calculated to persuade Luzerne's superiors to direct the money advanced to Sullivan to be included with the other manifold payments which France was daily making on account of her American allies, and there seems to be no other purpose for which the letter could have been reasonably designed. It is in accordance with this view of the matter too, that Luzerne nowhere states that Sullivan understood that the money which he received, or which was subsequently offered him, was other than the private property of Luzerne, and to be repaid to him as such; nor that Sullivan knew that it was sought to be charged to the public account, or that the transaction was disclosed to Vergennes or to any other person. And it is proper to add that it is not pretended that any further advance was ever made; that no evidence has appeared that the one in question was actually defrayed from

the French treasury; and nothing to show that it was not subsequently repaid to Luzerne by Sullivan.*

If the despatch contains even a reasonable implication that General Sullivan received or retained as a bribe the money he had from Luzerne, your committee are unable to perceive it, and it must be of too indirect and vague a character to justify the odious charge of venality.

Perhaps this subject ought not to be dismissed without an allusion to the character of the persons inculpated by Mr. Bancroft's assertions.

M. de la Luzerne has uniformly borne the character of a man of honor. When Benedict Arnold, some months before the time in question, went to him with a proposal to sell himself to the service of the French king, Luzerne, while uttering a courteous refusal, did not disguise the feeling of aversion he entertained for such a transaction. His conduct while an envoy to this country was such as to call forth from Congress

* In the Circular alluded to in the former note, it appears for the first time that the Cabinet of Versailles made a reply to the despatch of Luzerne. Mr. Bancroft, when applied to by the descendants of General Sullivan for the grounds of his statement respecting their ancestor, wrote (see Circular, pp. 2, 3), "My authority for this statement was a circumstantial report made to Vergennes by Luzerne himself." He did not hint at a reply to that report; nor, we are assured, did he lay before the copyist employed by Sullivan's descendants to transcribe his "authority," the reply, or any part of it. Why he kept it back, if he considered it of any importance, every one must form his own opinion. The Circular gives the following extract from the reply:—

From the Cabinet of Versailles to M. de la Luzerne.

(*Extract.*)

27 July, 1781.

I cannot but approve, Monsieur, the pecuniary assistance you have rendered to General Sullivan. You may continue it to him as long as he shall sit in Congress, and you will carry the amount to the account of your extraordinary expenses, avoiding the mention of his name.

This "extract" simply indicates that Luzerne *had leave* to charge the loan already made to the public account, and to make General Sullivan further specified advances on the same account. But it nowhere appears that Luzerne was in fact under the necessity of resorting to the French treasury for reimbursement of the loan, — while the expiration of General Sullivan's term of service in Congress, and his return to New Hampshire, preclude the idea of his receiving any further advance. But the really important thing of all is, that there is no syllable of evidence in the despatch or the reply that Sullivan ever knew or suspected that the fact of the loan from Luzerne was made known to Vergennes, or that such a thing as transferring it to the French treasury was ever thought of. So far as Sullivan is concerned, the correspondence between the Frenchmen was absolutely *res inter alios acta*.

flattering expressions of esteem after the peace, and from Washington, through Jefferson as Secretary of State, a handsome acknowledgment of his services, in behalf of the nation after the organization of the Federal Government. The French minister could hardly have been guilty of corrupting prominent members of Congress without some whisper of the fact being borne to the ears of at least the Commander-in-Chief and first President; and we cannot imagine our Washington directing a laudatory message to an ambassador who lay under the faintest suspicion of so abusing his high trust.

General Sullivan had faults, no doubt, but they were the farthest from falsehood and venality. History has never assailed his probity, and tradition, which in his native State has handed down his characteristics with apparent fidelity, uniformly represents him as of scrupulous integrity. His fellow-citizens, who ought to have judged him correctly, loaded him with offices of high trust after the war; and Washington, who knew and chided* his real failings, had so implicit a reliance on his honor and uprightness, that he appointed him to the position of United States judge for the District of New Hampshire, which he held till his death.

A circumstance which occurred in the early part of 1781, a few months after Luzerne made the loan to Sullivan, ought to have a strong bearing on the question under consideration. The Pennsylvania troops had revolted, and were in a state of insurrection, and Sullivan was appointed chairman of a committee of Congress to bring them back to their allegiance. The British general, hearing of the mutiny, despatched messengers to the troops to entice them to desert to the royal standard; but the Pennsylvanians, true to their country even

* [The only instances in which Washington ever said what could be construed as censure or disparagement of Sullivan are believed to be in his letter in July, 1776, when he imputes to him a "little vanity," implying an overweening faith in his own resources, at the same time giving him credit for numerous other invaluable qualities for the service; and again, three years later, when on vindicating himself to Congress from what he considered an implied reflection for not furnishing more men and supplies for the Indian campaign, he intimates rather than states that, in the exhausted condition of the country, to ask for more was to be unreasonably exacting.]

when they believed she had wronged them, voluntarily turned over the emissaries to the committee of Congress to be dealt with as spies. Sullivan wrote an account of the matter to Luzerne in these words: —

“One circumstance ought not to be omitted, which, in my judgment, does the insurgents much honor. When they delivered up the British emissaries, Governor Reed offered them one hundred golden guineas, which they refused, saying that what they did was only a duty they owed to their country, and that they neither wanted nor would receive any reward but the approbation of that country for which they had so often fought and bled.”

It is absolutely incredible that a man in the position of Sullivan, if *he* had just been receiving the wages of iniquity for being faithless to his country, could address such language to his partner in the dishonor.

John Sullivan has now lain in an honored grave for the greater part of a century, every year of which furnishes an additional presumption against the truth of an accusation which no man ventured to make to his living face. If we are now called upon to credit the utterly improbable story that he bartered his honor and his country for a paltry sum of money, it can only be on evidence unmistakable, abundant, and conclusive.

In the judgment of your Committee, the allegations of Mr. Bancroft impugning the integrity of General Sullivan are unsupported by the evidence, and are unworthy of credence; and justice to the memory of General Sullivan, to say nothing of a regard for his own accuracy and fairness as a historian, calls upon Mr. Bancroft to retract the offensive charge without delay.

CHARLES H. BELL,
W. H. Y. HACKETT,
J. EVERETT SARGENT,
N. BOUTON,
J. B. WALKER,
JOHN ELWYN.

[The two foot-notes in brackets are not part of the report.]

ERRORS OF THE COPYIST CORRECTED.

IN a communication to the "Daily Advertiser" of Boston, on last Thursday, Oct. 12, 1875, we were charged with circulating an imperfect and garbled translation of the Luzerne letter. We have circulated no other translation of the letter than that printed in the "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society;" making, for reasons stated in the foot-note, page 25, but one solitary alteration, in rendering *en ajoutant* "in adding" instead of "adding." Such a charge seems especially provoking as we had taken every precaution to guard against the unfair imputations we had reason to expect from the calumniator of General Sullivan, by placing the copy of the letter procured by our copyist in Washington, and its translation, in the keeping of the Massachusetts Historical Society, whose publishing committee, with zealous care that the translation should be an exact rendering of the original, printed them both in their Proceedings.

Early in May we published a vindication, entitled "General Sullivan not a Pensioner of Luzerne," and, with it, printed from the electrotpe plates of the Society the letter and translation; and this we circulated as extensively as our means permitted, in order that our countrymen might judge for themselves if the aspersion cast upon one who was prominent in our great national epoch was justified. In July appeared a circular of the publishers, spread broadcast over the land, stating that the phrase alluded to below had been omitted by the copyist, and containing an answer from Vergennes to Luzerne not submitted to him when employed to copy whatever evidence the historian possessed to justify his statement. At the time when the circular first came to our knowledge, a committee of the New Hampshire Historical Society had the subject under considera-

tion; and, as they proposed to make the translation in the circular the basis of their report, and that report was promised at an early day in print, there seemed no occasion for us to occupy public attention with the subject again before their report was published. We knew very well that the passage inadvertently omitted by our copyist, if in the copy of the letter submitted to him in Washington, could be no additional proof of what was utterly untrue, — of a mere chimera of the distorted imagination of the historian; but, if thought otherwise, the circular had informed the public that the line had been omitted. The members of the committee of the New Hampshire Historical Society, living at considerable distances apart, their report was not in print before September. It contains the translation of the Luzerne letter in the circular of the publishers, or so much of it as had any bearing upon the questions involved. It was at once placed in the hands of the printers, and will be found at page 51 of this publication.

Since our reply to the communication in the "Advertiser" our attention has been called, for the first time, to a fly-leaf attached to the "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society," stating that our copyist had made two other errors, — one in writing "bonté" instead of "louche," the other "moteur" instead of "manteau." These errors, which no malice will venture to charge as intentional, are set right in the translation of the circular, made part of the report of the New Hampshire Historical Society, and under the circumstances did not justify, from their significance, any such uncourteous attack upon ourselves as that in the "Advertiser." If not the historian himself, "C." must be one very like him, or he would have refrained from an imputation he knew without foundation against us, who, in the discharge of a sacred duty, have been scrupulously just; and also forbearing in seeking redress from public opinion.

In the publishers' circular, the word "vous" precedes "fisse," and explains the comment made in our reply to the communication in the "Advertiser," printed below. It is omitted in the fly-leaf alluded to, of which we knew nothing

when we made our reply. We publish that reply here as part of the history of our vindication. We should also state that the report of Congress recommending that General Sullivan should be paid fifteen hundred dollars in gold, for money advanced by him to the public service, was made July 20, 1781. It was inconvenient for Mr. Morris to pay more than two hundred dollars, and more convenient for General Sullivan to have the balance paid him at home. This balance was not paid, as will be seen by a letter addressed by him to the New Hampshire Committee of Safety, May 11, 1782, for some time after. The copy of this letter, sent from Concord, bears date, obviously by mistake, 1784.

As the report was made to Congress two months after the Luzerne letter was written, and he left Philadelphia for home in August, before the answer of Vergennes could have been received, there seems no reason to believe any second loan was made, but much that the first was then repaid. We would further urge, that the proposition to make him in the future other loans than that accepted, having every appearance on the part of Luzerne of a generous wish to befriend him in his straits, it would have been churlish not to have received it with grateful acknowledgment. With these words of explanation, we append our reply to the communication in the "Daily Advertiser:" —

As we are the only male descendants of General Sullivan in New England, we feel called upon to deny unequivocally the statement of your correspondent, C., that we have published any incomplete or garbled translation of the Luzerne letter. When the charge maligning General Sullivan appeared, we wrote demanding the authority on which it was made; and in answer to our second application we were informed that, if we sent a copyist to his house in Washington, a copy could be had. Unable to go on to Washington, and naturally indisposed to have any personal interview with the calumniator of one whose memory is dear to us from the part he took in the struggle for American independence, as for much else, we requested our friend Major Appleton, of the Patent Office, to send a competent person to copy the letter of Luzerne to Vergennes, which was the only authority mentioned or pretended.

The copy thus made was, a few days after its arrival here, presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society; and that copy, with a translation, approved by their publishing committee, was printed for their Proceedings. The copy so sent on to us is now open to inspection; and any one can see at a glance that it has not been altered a word or a comma, except in printing the word "Je" instead of "de." The passage in which this occurs in the copy sent and printed by the Society reads: "J'ignore combien de tems il doit encore rester dans le Congrès, mais j'ai pensé que vous ne désapprouverez pas que je fisse l'offre *de* lui ai fait l'année dernière." A version printed some time after by the booksellers of the author has, after *lui*, the words "continuer tous les six mois le prêt que je lui." If these words were in the paper submitted, they must have been inadvertently omitted by him. He was an entire stranger to us; he had no communication with any one but Major Appleton; and they are not material to the question, as the loan was not repeated. Such version would signify that the offer or proposition to repeat the loan every six months of about three hundred dollars, so long as General Sullivan remained in Congress, was made to Vergennes, and not to him. Before any answer could come from Vergennes, his congressional term had expired. He had expended all his resources in the public service. Government had no means to pay even the advances made by him in the war. They were voted to him in September, as he was going home to resume his profession to support his distressed family. But only two hundred dollars was available to pay him, and the rest he received in a draft on New Hampshire, not paid till a long time afterwards.

The New Hampshire Historical Society, by an able committee, of which their president was chairman, have thoroughly investigated the imputation made upon the honor of General Sullivan; and we appeal to the candor of our countrymen, whether to persist in such a charge when decided groundless by a tribunal not to be questioned for its ability or impartiality, does not show a malignant spirit. General Sullivan was far from home, without bread, in the public service. The government owed him five thousand dollars, of which two hundred alone were realized for several years. Under such circumstances, for him to receive a loan not sought by himself, but proffered by Luzerne, was his right, and perfectly honorable. To pretend that his argument in Congress against coupling the fisheries with national independence as conditions of negotiation were influenced by the loan, is an inference not supported by the slightest evidence of probability, and is inherently absurd; and

to seek to defame any person, especially one who made as great sacrifices for his country as General Sullivan, indicates a spirit which we regard with surprise and indignation.

The charge made by your correspondent is, that we have published a garbled translation of the Luzerne letter. The letter in the original sent by our copyist was printed by the publishing committee of the Massachusetts Historical Society, except as above mentioned, precisely as received, with a translation also approved by the committee. The report of the Historical Society of New Hampshire will be in a few days within the reach of any one disposed to examine for himself, attached to the vindication of General Sullivan already published.

After the issue last spring of that vindication appeared the circular of the bookseller of the historian, with the words omitted in the copy by our copyist, which then, with the reply of Vergennes of July 27, were first brought to our notice. The New Hampshire society have made the letter, as printed in that circular, part of their report, and the ground for their conclusion that the charge against General Sullivan was entirely unsustained by the evidence offered, and ought to be retracted.

If asked why General Sullivan did not communicate the overture of Sir Henry Clinton to his own government, there is no evidence that he did not, and much reasonable probability that he did. But such overtures were nothing new. Whoever is familiar with the history of that period will find numerous attempts to corrupt members of Congress and other prominent leaders, equally bold and plausible. We think we may safely appeal to Dr. Ellis for our faith, that the passage containing the words quoted in the circular of the publishers, and now by your correspondent, had no reference whatever to General Sullivan. We should be glad, as interest in the untarnished reputation of every general officer of our great historical epoch is not confined to any one locality, that publishers of the periodical press throughout the country should copy this into their pages.

JOHN SULLIVAN.

EDWARD SULLIVAN.

Letter of General Sullivan to Committee of Safety of New Hampshire.

DURHAM, May 11, 1782.

GENTLEMEN, — I do myself the honor to inclose you a letter from Mr. Morris, Minister of France, in answer to my letter to him of the 1st of April.

When I was at the Congress, last winter, I obtained an order from Congress on the financier for fifteen hundred dollars, fourteen hundred of which was for cash advanced by me in 1776, and for which I have had no interest. Mr. Morris paid me two hundred dollars, and gave me an order on General Whipple, the treasurer of New Hampshire, for thirteen hundred dollars, which I then preferred to receiving the money in Philadelphia. The general at first gave me some encouragement, but, at the March Superior Court, informed me that his prospects had vanished, of which I informed Mr. Morris by my letter of the 1st of April, which produced the letter inclosed. The design of laying his letter before the committee is to get information whether my money is likely to be in the treasury soon, or is now there, to satisfy the demand, that I may, in case of no prospect of relief appearing, make a second application to Congress.

Your Honors must be sensible that the loss of interest on this sum for eight years, and the present disappointment, must be exceedingly hard upon one who has suffered as many losses in the public service as I have. I am therefore fully convinced that it would be the wish of every member of your honorable committee to discharge this demand, if the state of the public funds would admit. I therefore beg it may be contrived if possible; and, if not, that I may be favored with a letter in answer to this request.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

UP to July 27, 1781, the date of the reply of Vergennes to Luzerne, the salaries and incidental expenses of our foreign ministers were paid from the French treasury, and charged to the loans and subsidies of France to the United States. Much correspondence exists between the ministers on the subject. A few days after the reply of Vergennes, Dr. Franklin wrote Mr. Adams: "It is right to acquaint you that I do not think we can depend on receiving any more money here applicable to the support of the Congress ministers. What aids are granted will be transmitted directly to America." Not long after, official intimation was given by the French cabinet to Congress that this change had been determined upon. The fact seems significant. It is not our intention to follow the bad example of straining inference into argument or evidence; but it seems difficult to believe that Vergennes, if engaged with Luzerne in corrupting Congress, would have been likely to attract the attention of public men of America at home and abroad to his conduct, by a procedure peculiarly calculated to create disappointment, provoke discussion, and quicken scrutiny to discover the reasons that prompted him. The relief extended to General Sullivan in his straits needed no concealment on his part, could hardly have escaped observation, and Vergennes would have been cautious not to select that moment for withdrawing from the ministers this great privilege of receiving their salaries and incidental expenses in Europe, if he had been guilty as alleged. It seems much more natural that this new call upon the generosity of France to relieve the needs of members of Congress from its public treasury created alarm, and led to the course adopted.

It may be interesting to know how far intercourse with our allies in the war of independence was facilitated by familiarity on the part of our general officers and other leading men with their language. Our representatives abroad naturally and necessarily acquired it. And with so many officers in the French service in America or in our own armies who spoke English imperfectly or not at all, knowledge of French was an important accomplishment for their commanders to possess. Many of our generals had enjoyed better opportunities for acquiring and speaking it than General Sullivan; but his father, to whom he owed his education, had been brought up on the continent of Europe, and undoubtedly, in his earlier years, knew it well. The following letter is presented to show that it formed part of General Sullivan's early course of instruction, as he was not likely to have attained the facility of writing it without mistake whilst in the army or in Congress.

The letter will serve another purpose, inasmuch as Marbois, to whom it is addressed, was at the time Secretary of Legation to Luzerne; and not only so, but was, besides, the principal agent in the most important operations in the embassy, succeeding to its charge when Luzerne went home, in 1784. Besides an essay on Morality, he published, in 1816, the well-known work, "*Complot d'Arnold et de Sir Henry Clinton contre les États-Unis d'Amérique et contre le Général Washington.*" Had any such transaction as that alleged taken place, it neither would nor could have been concealed from him. The career of Marbois was without reproach; that he was a man of honor and integrity is a reasonable presumption. He must have been devoid of them if what is alleged were true, and known to be so to him, and he still represented Luzerne in his book as entertaining and expressing the noble sentiments attributed to him in rejecting the proposal of Arnold to be of use to France if his debts were paid. There still survived, when the work was published, persons who would have known if any attempt had ever been made by Luzerne to corrupt members of the American Congress, and Marbois would never have thought of representing Luzerne, if guilty of such courses, as denouncing the corruption he practised.

PHILADELPHIE, le 12 d'avril 1781.

MONSIEUR, — J'ai lu hier au soir la lettre qui a été publiée par Mr. Rivington sous le nom du Général Washington. Je ne crois pas qu'elle a été écrite par son Excellence ; mais si elle l'a été, il n'y a rien qui puisse donner la moindre inquiétude aux commandans de l'armée et d'escadre du Roi. Il y a dit qu'il étoit très malheureux que toute l'escadre françoise ne soit pas sorti d'abord avec les troupes de terre, au lieu d'un vaisseau de ligne et deux frégates, comme il l'avoit proposé, parce que si cela étoit fait dans ce tems là, qu'il falloit que Mr. Arnold avec son armée ait été prise, mais que cette petit [sic] flotte ne pouvait rien faire sans les troupes de terre. Il arrive journellement, monsieur, que les plus grands militaires pensent bien différemment sur le même objet, et la réussite n'est pas toujours la meilleure preuve de la sagesse de leurs mesures ; néanmoins le monde en général forme son jugement selon les événemens.

Je crois que le général a mentionné cette affaire, mais non pas avec les mêmes expressions qui sont publiées dans la Gazette Royale. Je suis surpris que Mr. Rivington n'y ait pas ajouté davantage. Il a publié dans une autre gazette une lettre du général au congrès, dans laquelle il lui demande la permission de se retirer du service des États Unis. Il a publié aussi la réponse du congrès à cette lettre, dont ni l'une ni l'autre n'ont jamais existé. Si Mr. Rivington pouvoit forger une lettre et une réponse tout entier, il ne devoit point trouver beaucoup des difficultés d'ajouter à celle du Général Washington tout ce qu'il lui étoit agréable.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec la plus parfaite estime, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

JOHN SULLIVAN.

It seems hardly necessary to append any translation of the foregoing letter, as the object of inserting it is simply to show that General Sullivan had a good knowledge of the French language, constituting, among others, one of his claims to consideration and welcome at the French legation. The contents of the letter have no official bearing upon the subject of this present publication, except that it was written but a few weeks before that of Luzerne to Vergennes, on which the charge rests. It was indirectly in answer to an inquiry by Marbois as to the genuineness of a letter in the gazette attributed to Washing-

ton. The following is believed to be an exact rendering of the original:—

PHILADELPHIA, 12 April, 1781.

SIR,—I read, yesterday evening, the letter which has been published by Mr. Rivington under the name of General Washington. I do not believe it has been written by his Excellency ; but, should it have been, there is nothing in it which should give the slightest uneasiness to the commanders of the army or of the fleet of the king. It says that it was unfortunate that the whole of the French fleet had not gone with the land force instead of a single ship of the line and two frigates, as he had proposed, because if that had been the case Mr. Arnold,* with his army, must have been taken ; but his small fleet could do nothing without land troops. It happens every day, sir, that the greatest soldiers think very differently upon the same subject, and the result (the success) is not always the best proof of the wisdom of their measures. Nevertheless, the world in general forms its judgment according to the event.

I believe the general has mentioned this affair, but not with the same expressions which are published in the "Royal Gazette." I am surprised that Mr. Rivington had not added more. He has published in another gazette a letter from the general to Congress, in which he asks permission to withdraw from the service of the United States. He has published also the reply of Congress to this letter, neither of which have ever existed. If Mr. Rivington could forge a letter and answer, he ought to find little difficulty in adding to that of General Washington all that was agreeable to him.

I have the honor to be, with the most perfect esteem, your very humble and obedient servant,

JOHN SULLIVAN.

A. M. M DE MARBOIS.

Another letter, somewhat later, from General Knox, informing him of the arrival of Moutiers, the new French Minister, in 1788, indicates the place General Sullivan held in his esteem and that of Lafayette. This is selected not that numerous others are not at hand to show unabated respect and confidence, but that Lafayette, who was the soul of honor, and must have known if General Sullivan had ever been in the pay of France or Luzerne

* Arnold was then devastating in Virginia.

and swerved in consequence from his duty, would hardly have come to the conclusion he was President of Congress at that time if he had any such impression of him. He was the chief magistrate of New Hampshire, had been before, and was again chosen the next year, and to his efforts and arguments has generally been ascribed the ratification of the Federal Constitution by that State, being the ninth, and the one that decided its adoption : —

[Private.]

NEW YORK, 19 January, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR, — The new Minister of France, the Count de Moutiers, who arrived yesterday, brought the inclosed letter from our common friend the Marquis de Lafayette. It is addressed to you, on the supposition of your being in this city and President of Congress. But, alas, there is no Congress, although two months have elapsed since one ought to have been assembled, agreeably to the Confederation. The new Constitution! the new Constitution! is the general cry this way. Much paper is spoiled on the subject, and many essays written, which perhaps are not read by either side. It is a stubborn fact that the present system, called the Confederation, has run down; that the springs, if ever it had others than the late army, have utterly lost their tone, and the machine cannot be wound up again; and that something must be done speedily, or we shall soon be involved in all the horrors of anarchy and separate State interests. This, indeed, appears to have been the serious judgment of all the States who have formally considered the new Constitution, and therefore have adopted it, not as a perfect system, but as the best that could be obtained under existing circumstances.

If to those States which have already received it Massachusetts and New Hampshire should be added, a doubt could not be entertained but that it will be received generally in the course of the present year. If Massachusetts and New Hampshire reject it, we shall have to encounter a boisterous and uncertain ocean of events.

Should you have leisure, I shall be much obliged for a confidential information of the disposition of New Hampshire on the subject. And you may rest assured that your confidence shall not be misplaced.

I am, my dear sir, with great respect and affection, your most obedient and humble servant,

H. KNOX.

His Excellency JOHN SULLIVAN, Esq.

S U M M A R Y.

IN this appeal to the public in vindication from undeserved reproach of a memory it is our duty to guard, sustained as we are by the New Hampshire Historical Society and many officers and members of other societies, and individuals in great number whose special historical pursuits render them quite as competent to weigh the evidence offered as Mr. Bancroft, we feel entire confidence that all unprejudiced and candid minds will concur in the following conclusions : —

That General Sullivan, having expended all his available resources in the service of his country, and without means to pay his daily expenses, could, with perfect propriety, accept a loan of about three hundred dollars, voluntarily offered from M. Luzerne as from any other friend, especially as he had reason to expect the government would soon place him in funds, as they actually did, to repay it, in reimbursement to him of advances he had made in the public service. That it was what any sensible man would have done, under like circumstances, when in need.

That his argument and vote against coupling the fisheries with independence in the ultimatum, when they were already sufficiently provided for by the instructions, were the part of wisdom and true patriotism ; and the motives of such men as John Jay and the other members of the majority who defeated the proposed amendment might as well be impugned as General Sullivan's.

That Luzerne, in the depressed condition of affairs before the surrender of Cornwallis, might well be in doubt of recovering the loan, and wish his government should assume it. That the only pretext that could warrant the shifting of the debt

from himself to the treasury was that it was for public objects. This wish may have colored his statement of the case ; but that he had no reason to doubt the integrity of General Sullivan is as distinctly asserted. All wars are uncertain in their issue. Reverses might have set at naught the hope of independence, left France to fight the battle alone, or make peace under circumstances to her disadvantage. It was Luzerne's duty to keep informed of the disposition of all public men in Philadelphia ; and his assurance to Vergennes that he should be vigilant in watching the course of the attempt of Sir Henry Clinton to obtain General Sullivan's assistance in restoring the colonies to the British crown, may have been incumbent upon the minister ; but no one who knew that from the outbreak of the war General Sullivan had been uniformly opposed to reconciliation, and had never swerved from any obligation, would think less of him from this expression.

That, considering the position occupied by him in the army, and especially from his having been selected to co-operate with D'Estaing in 1778, the unvarying affection manifested towards him by Lafayette, by Washington and Greene, his frequent acts of kindness and loans to French officers in distress, it was natural that the king, cabinet, and Vergennes should have gladly expressed their willingness to relieve his necessities without expecting any unworthy return, and that the caution not to mention his name was precisely what would naturally have suggested itself to any gentleman, as delicate and proper.

That there is every reason to believe that the loan was repaid,—Sullivan had property and money due him from various persons, which he refrained from calling in lest it should distress them ; but the fifteen hundred dollars in gold voted him by Congress, before Vergennes's assent to Luzerne's proposition to charge the loan to his extraordinary expenses arrived, enabled him to do so, and there is every reason to believe he paid it then, if not already paid from his other resources. His being without means up to May 13, the date of Luzerne's letter, is no proof that he may not have had

remittances from home in June. But, whether paid or not, — and the burden of proof that it was not is on the calumniator, — when it was made, the evidence is explicit that it was offered as a loan and accepted as a loan, and there is no proof or likelihood that any second loan was made.

That there is not the slightest intimation in the letter, direct or indirect, that the loan was made upon any agreement, promise, understanding, expectation, or encouragement that in consequence, or in consideration thereof, General Sullivan would render any service whatsoever to France or its minister; that no other evidence is offered or pretended of any such obligation being assumed; that the whole tenor of the letter is inconsistent with any such supposition; and that the allegation, made without proof, evidence, or possibility, is simply an invention of the maligner.

That we have done our best to procure an exact copy of the Luzerne letter, and a fair rendering of it into English, and, in order to protect ourselves from ungenerous or dishonest imputation, placed them in the keeping of the Massachusetts Historical Society, that they might be printed under their supervision. For the three mistakes made by the copyist — “bonté” for “louche,” “moteur” for “manteau,” and line omitted between the two words, “lui,” which commenced two successive lines — we are not responsible. He was a stranger to us. The circular of the publishers, widely distributed, corrected them. The New Hampshire Historical Society adopted the translation of the circular as the basis of their report in which it was incorporated, and which was immediately promised in print. We have used all diligence to expedite this present publication, which contains it. We find the electrotpe plates of the letter and translation from which they have been struck off for this publication remain as originally printed; and it is best that they should be reprinted as they stand, as the corrections are made apparent in the notes and context, so as not to mislead, and, thus placed, explain more intelligibly the course we have pursued to obtain the pretended evidence of the charge, and bring it to public notice.

That rodomontade and display of irrelevant learning is out of place in historical works; while fidelity to truth, freedom from prejudice, thoroughness of treatment, are indispensable to their claim to confidence. The works of the calumniator are too well known not to be soon superseded by some other more reliable, and the present instance, it is to be hoped, will place future writers on their guard against mistake, lead them to examine the original records and correspondence before accepting accounts of the military services of General Sullivan which can be proved, in nearly every circumstance related, to be erroneously stated in the work of the calumniator.

That, having waited patiently, without menace or solicitation, for this charge, pronounced by a competent tribunal to be unsustained, to be publicly withdrawn, — the amends to which we feel ourselves entitled, — and the assailant not having the magnanimity to do so, we shall be borne out in saying that this unscrupulous attempt to vilify the dead and wound the just sensibility of the living without the slightest proof, evidence, or probability, is an outrage of which no man could be guilty unless devoid of moral sense. His age and our respect for the public peace may protect him from personal resentment; but we should have little faith in the integrity or love of justice of our countrymen, if they are not of a mind, that a writer, who sets so little value upon character as to attempt to tarnish it by strained and malicious inferences from so simple a transaction as a friendly loan to an officer of the Revolution when in need, deserves their execration as a falsifier of history.





